

Nemo

the classic comics library

Number 16 □ December 1985 □ \$3.50 (\$4.85 in Canada)

EPIC FANTASY:
The Penwork of
Joseph Clement Coll

CORTO MALTESE:
Europe's Greatest
Comics Hero

The Centennial Of Mark Twain's Classic American Novel, "Huckleberry Finn"

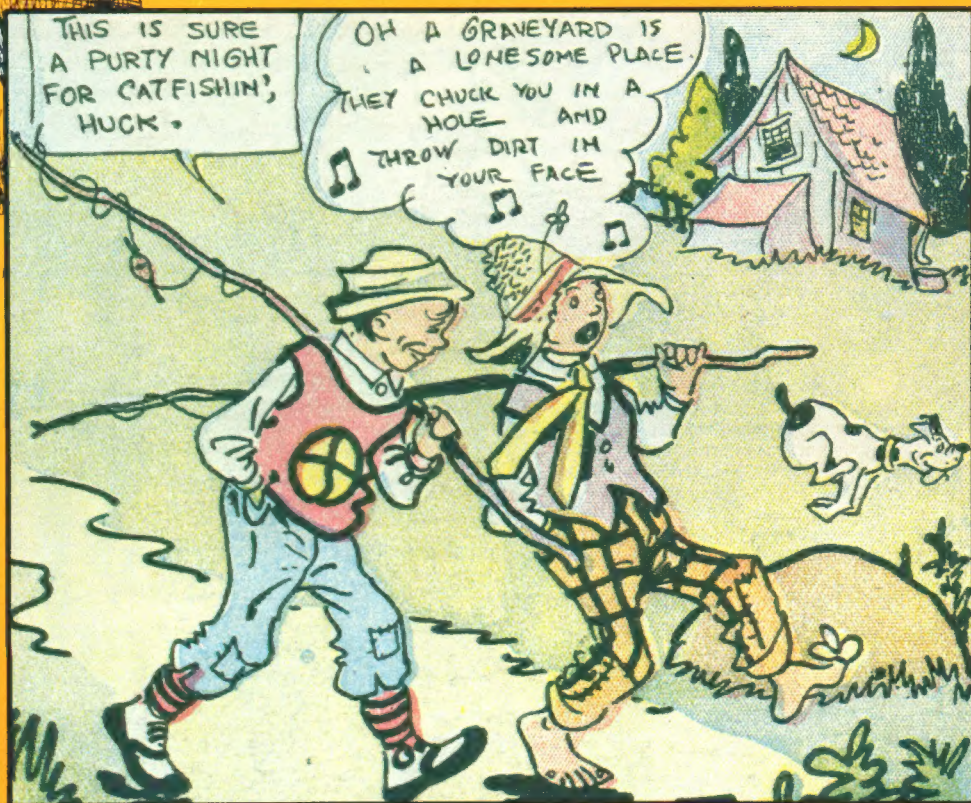
Illustrating "Huckleberry Finn"
by E.W. Kemble

And a Portfolio of Rare Comic
Strips of Huck and Tom by Dwig



Kemble

Plus:
BARON BEAN
Runs For
Constable
by George
Herriman



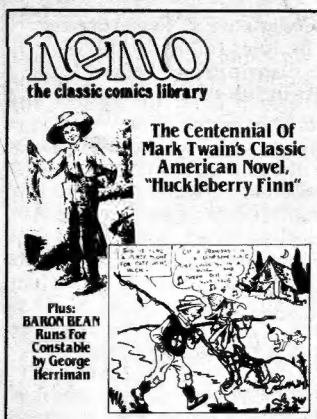
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No. 16
DEC. 1985



ABOVE: Huck Finn. BELOW: Baron Bean.



Cover illustrations by E.W. Kemble and Dwig, featuring characters created by Mark Twain.

NEMO: The Classic Comics Library (ISSN 0746-9438) # 16, December, 1985. Vol II, No. 6. Published bi-monthly by Fantagraphics Books, Inc., 4359 Cornell Road, Agoura, CA 91301. One-year subscription (six issues): \$21.00. Outside the U.S.: \$30.00 in U.S. funds. Second-class postage paid at Agoura and additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address change to: NEMO, POB 787, Bethel CT 06801. Entire contents copyright © 1985 Fantagraphics Books, Inc. The articles and essays in *NEMO* are © by their respective authors. Special contents of *NEMO* are © by Richard Marschall and Fantagraphics Books. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without written permission from Fantagraphics Books or Richard Marschall. Letters to *NEMO* become the property of the magazine and are assumed intended for print in whole or in part, and may therefore be used for those purposes. First printing: November, 1985.



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MUSEUM OF CARTOON ART, SAN FRANCISCO ACADEMY OF COMIC ART

Printed at:

PORT PUBLICATIONS

DISTRIBUTED BY:

Bud Plant, Inc., PO Box 1886, Grass Valley CA 95945 U.S.A. (916) 273-9588

Capital City Distribution, 2827 Perry St., Madison WI 53713 U.S.A. (608) 274-8987

Diamond Comic Distributors, 1720 Belmont Ave., Bay B-2, Baltimore MD 21207 U.S.A. (301) 298-1184

Fantagraphics Books, Inc., 4359 Cornell Road, Agoura CA 91301 U.S.A. (818) 706-7606

Glenwood Distributors, 124 Vandalia, Collinsville IL 62234 U.S.A. (618) 345-1027

Second Genesis, 1112 NE 21st Street, Portland OR 97232 U.S.A. (503) 281-1821

Styx Comics Service, 1858 Arlington Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2X 1W6 Canada (204) 586-8547

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- 11 *Sam's Strip* premieres: "Dwig's" cartoons; giant Charles Dana Gibson portfolio; James Montgomery Flagg remembered; and the forgotten antics of *Slim Jim*.
- 12 The cartoonists who fought World War II: Frank King's most fantastic strip; Jack Williamson and Lee Elias's *Beyond Mars* SF strip; and penwoman Rose O'Neill.
- 13 Big half-year sequence from Will Gould's classic, violent *Red Barry*; *Major Hoople*; a look back at TAD; and another installment of *Sam's Strip*.
- 14 The decorative art of George McManus, with McManus full-color cover; *Moon Mullins* reprinted; the beginning of *Hairbreadth Harry*; and *Sam's Strip*.
- 15 Milton Caniff's classic *Dickie Dare* reprinted; *Tim Tyler's Luck*; *Hairbreadth Harry* continues; an extra-long European heroes; plus reviews and letters.
- 16 A retrospective of *Huckleberry Finn*'s comics adaptations; George Herriman's *Baron Bean*; *Hairbreadth Harry* concludes; the art of Joseph Clement Coll.
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Editorial

One Thousand Pages

One day last week one of my secretaries buzzed me in the message unit of one of the *NEMO* limousines that Fantagraphics thoughtfully provides for senior staff members. It seems that a delegation of department heads wanted to see me, she said. It will have to wait, I replied, since plans were set to leave that evening for the Congress of Sequential-Narration Literati, Cognoscenti, and Buffs in the exclusive Blackbeard Islands off Bermuda.

The fellow-workers would not wait, she said, and besides, she had already arranged for the International Congress to be rescheduled. This had better be important. I directed the special *NEMO* chauffeur to return to headquarters.

As we pulled up to the *NEMO* Building, I reflected on how much had changed since we began publication. A few of you readers have been with us from the very start, so you might forgive this nostalgic aside, but for the multitudes yet unborn when *NEMO* first saw the light of day, they probably won't forgive this nostalgic aside. But I'm going to do it anyway, so there.

Back in the Spring of 1983 (or the Spring of '83, as historians have come to call it) *NEMO* was born. Our offices were then a sparse affair—lonely garrets interrupted by an occasional atelier, inhabited by just myself and my ancient assistant, Lonely Garrets, who, with much free time on his hands, spent his hours pining for those sparse affairs of days gone by. Mostly, Lonely and I would pass the time by exchanging old comic-strip clippings back and forth. Actually, he would pass them forth and I would pass them back, but I am getting ahead of myself. What happened, more to the point—very much more, as a matter of fact (to use a term that has become common amongst historians), was that one day our perverid exchanging of old strips was interrupted by one of those occasional ateliers referred to above.

"Which one of you is Mostly Lonely?" she inquired, and after the proper introductions (this is a family magazine) she grilled us on why we merely exchanged strips instead of publishing the world's foremost magazine of classic strips, containing reprints, reviews, interviews, and essays in a handsome format, easily collectible, certainly affordable, and printed on pretty white paper, the kind that will surely last for generations, if you will forgive the technical historical terminology.

After her grilling, we sat down to a fine meal of grilled editors, lam-basted assistants, and hackneyed clichés, which where then (as now! Eh, boys?) knee-deep in grasshoppers. We even invited all the grills and boys in the neighborhood. It was then that an idea suddenly impressed itself upon me. "Hey!", I shouted, and the stadium fell at once into hushed silence.

The words flew from my mouth even before I could utter them. "How about starting a magazine of classic strips, containing reprints, reviews, interviews, and essays in a handsome format, easily collectible, certainly affordable, and printed on pretty white paper?"

"Only if it's the world's foremost!" said the assembled majors domo. "Tastes great!" angrily answered the dilettantes, and violence was averted when Hurricane Peppy struck, washing away any trace of the civilization until the brave team led by Prof. Kimley Thompson... but who gives a fig about history? It is the present we are concerned with.

Actually, I *knew*, in my heart of hearts, precisely *why* our band of zealots could not undertake to publish the world's foremost... Just then a man interrupted me so that I didn't have to repeat the stupid promotion. He came from a city that had been banned of zealots, and he shared my secret; with a knowing eye he spoke. Naturally, I couldn't understand a word of what he saw, but the meaning was true: The strips Mr. Garrets and I had been exchanging simply weren't old enough!

By next Tuesday, however, everything was in order, and now let us draw the veil (use your Gillot 170s for drawing veils, pupils) on this scene.

It is now 16 issues later, and my *NEMO* limousine pulls into the Executive-Editor-and-Executive-Art-Director parking spot. As the *NEMO* golf cart transports me to the main entrance, I wave at the assembled strip fans outside the gate, gratefully

waiting for their tour of *NEMO* headquarters. Up, up, the elevator; past the Popeye reception room; the Major Hoople cafeteria with its champagne fountain; the Slim Jim sauna and exercise room for our hundreds of employees; the secretarial pool (with constantly monitored temperature and pH); the vast library of comics on file; the observation decks brooded over by Decks Ritter; up, up, up to the Executive suite, where my staff awaited.

Instinctively, I felt my shoulder holster; it was a condition borne of reading monographs as a child, but had saved my neck many a time. By way of introduction, I warily said, "My rod and my staff, they comfit me." But Executive Sweet broke the silence, and led all in a lusty rendition of the word, "Surprise!"

It was, I learned thereafter, indeed a surprise. You see, with this issue—No. 16 of *NEMO: The Classic Comics Library*—we have reached the milestone of 1000 pages. But then if I had been more the mathematician, less the historian, I might still be exchanging jests with the late Herr Garrets, and this magazine might be pretty white tree instead of whatever it is you're holding in your hands.

All of which is to say that yes, we have counted up to our first thousand pages of *NEMO*.

Presidential administrations are noted on their thousandth days, and federal budget deficits are tallied by the thousands; nevertheless 1000 pages of classic comics and loving criticism seems a special milestone, and we—publisher Gary Groth and I and the rest of the names on the masthead (if not in my imagination)—are proud to have been able to conduct *NEMO* so as to bring the past to life and celebrate a unique and largely uncelebrated American art form.

A thousand pages represents a lot of classic material, but also suggests so much more to come: why, we have not yet hardly referred to Alex Raymond, or Roy Crane, or Walt Kelly, not to mention dozens of famous features and scores of forgotten masterpieces. Neglect? No, just the fact—at once exciting and reassuring—that there is still a whole lot of great stuff out there.

Thanks for being along for the ride. Take a twenty from the cash register for yourselves and take the rest of the day off.

NOTES: Many readers have praised our *Red Barry* run (*NEMO* No. 13) and asked about Will Gould's whereabouts... Will died last year after suffering severe burns in an apartment fire... I neglected in my notes to mention that my companion when I visited Will was Boston Don Phelps, he of the Sunday Funnies and collector *extraordinaire*... Another Donald Phelps, *NEMO* contributor, as well as Mark Johnson, author of *NEMO* No. 12's Frank King article, noted two typos in said article: *Foolish Limericks* and *Honest Harold* were multi-authored, not multi-colored; and it was Adolph, not Bobby Make-Believe, who was the strip's bully. We list three proofreaders on our masthead but I'm afraid things get through... Another omission: Somehow in *NEMO* No. 13's TAD article, the sidebar listing his contributions to slang omitted my homage to TAD's christening of the "hot dog" for the frankfurter sausage; only the "exclamation of surprise" definition made it in... With real sorrow we noted the passing of *Mary Worth* artist Ken Ernst just when No. 14—with his self-caricatures—was at the printer... Allen Saunders's entertaining autobiography will be concluding soon, with a rousing reprint of vintage *Kerry Drake*... "Playwright for Paper Actors" as well as other regular features like *Sam's Strip* will take a vacation next issue as we focus on Chester Gould and *Dick Tracy*... Readers who know of celebrities who are especially fond of comics are requested to contact Rick Marshall c/o *NEMO* for a feature we are planning.

Rick Marshall



The Diary of a Deluded Dandy

Baron Bean de la Mancha
He Runs for Constable

Many of the great cartoonists in comic-strip history have worked on several features and, naturally, their artistic growth is reflected in the strips of their various stages.

If a musicological parallel is not too tenuous, we can chronicle Roy Crane's career like a Baroque Concerto Grosso—the three movements being *Wash Tubbs* (exuberant), *Captain Easy* (determined), and *Buz Sawyer* (full of virtuosity). Likewise Alex Raymond's career can be likened to the movements of a Classic Symphony—*Secret Agent X-9*; *Flash Gordon*; *Jungle Jim*; *Rip Kirby*—taking note along the way that there are no cadenzas in the form.

Well, it can seem too tenuous, but the point should be taken that there is a select group of cartoonists whose careers overflowed with thematic inventions. George Herriman created strips—more than a dozen successful ones—of commercial success, creative appeal, and a broadness of style and range that was astounding. In this Herriman's career can be likened to a Rococo Serenade (or perhaps a cassation, divertimento, or even High Baroque Suite) with a multitude of playful dances and varied lyrical conceits.

We pause to consider *Baron Bean*. It was unlike *Krazy Kat* in its lowlife preoccupations; it was unlike *Major Ozone*, the *Fresh Air Fiend* in its examination of comradeship (however deluded those relationships); certainly unlike *Us Husbands*, because the Baron never identified with the everyday challenges to the Everyman that nevertheless dogged him.

(By the way, that most of us are unaware of the names, much less the contents, of Herriman's many strips, is a tragedy of history, attributable to America's shameful neglect of her own culture. *NEMO* will, bit by bit, resurrect the important masterpieces; see, for instance, Bill Blackbeard's memorable essay on The Forgotten Herriman in *NEMO* #1.)

Baron Bean was a daily strip that Herriman drew for a time when he was also producing the daily, and then the Sunday, *Krazy Kat*. The Baron bowed in on Jan. 5, 1916, and took his leave just three years later, on Jan. 22, 1919. He succeeded *The Family Upstairs* as Herriman's second slot on the daily Hearst comic pages, and he was certainly less manic in his preoccupations than the Dingbat family whose lives were obsessed with discovering their overhead tormentor. The Baron was also more urbane than a second-cousin among Herriman's earlier creations, Baron Mooch, who was an outright prevaricator and snitch.

The Baron was a type more familiar to earlier 20th-century America than ours. America was awash with titled gents on their uppers. Daughters of "The 400" were particularly susceptible to impoverished European dukes, barons, and lords, and were only too willing to trade their family fortune for titles. Social critics, and cartoonists like Charles Dana Gibson, made careers out of lampooning this phenomenon.

In *Baron Bean*'s case we are never sure whether he actually has a title or has appropriated one; he is less the *poseur*, however, than a self-deluding dreamer. The Baron assumes he is entitled the world's obeisance, but for all his sincerity and self-assurance his field of vision is never wider than lunch-counters and small-town politics. In a very real sense he is a latter-day Don Quixote, and Herriman dotted his Eyes and crossed his Teas by providing a descendant

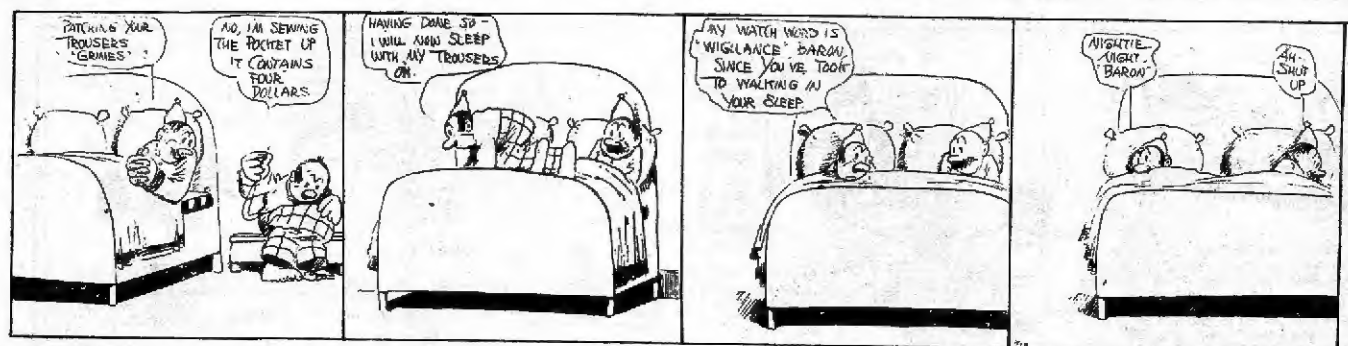
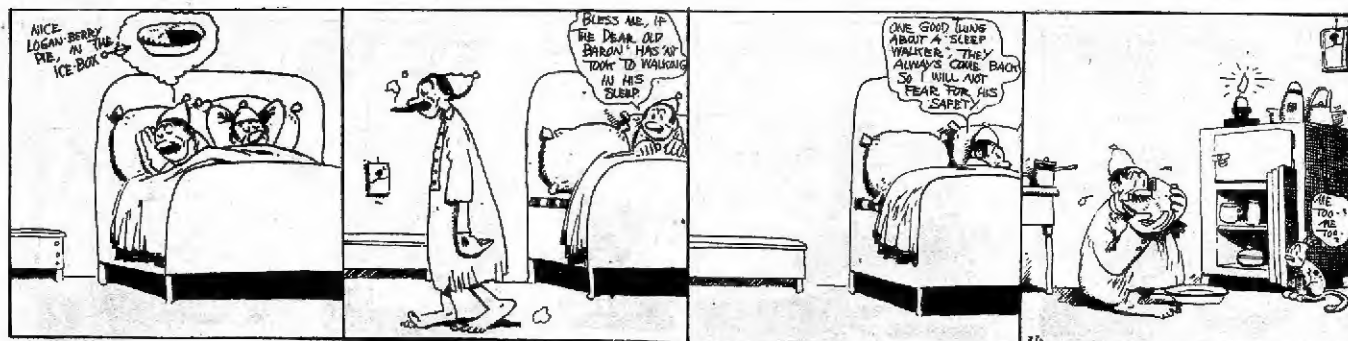
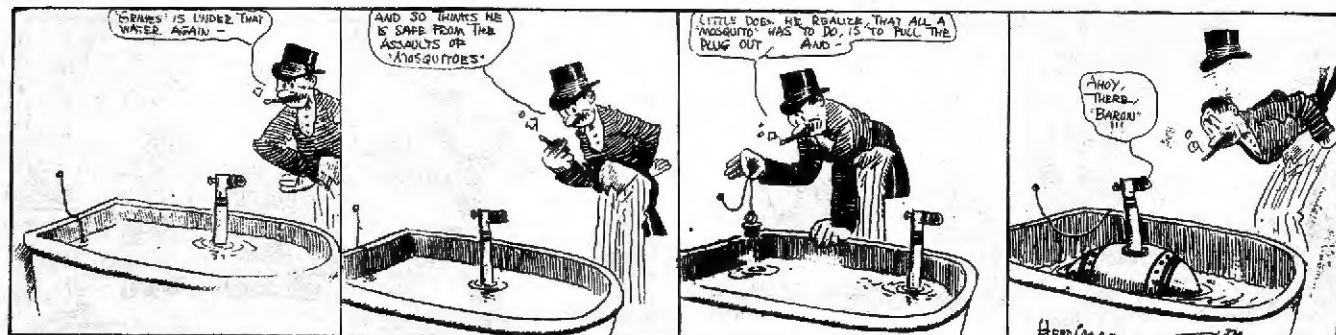
of Sancho Panza in the person of the factotum Grimes. Although the pair seemed occasionally wise to each other, and even became rivals for certain prizes, there was a basic comradeship. Grimes knew his place, and stuck with Baron Bean through thin and thinner.

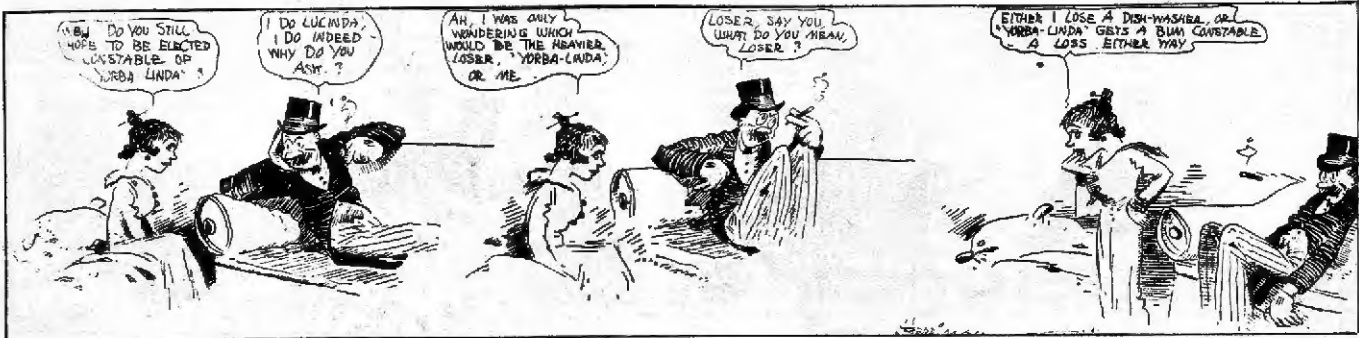
The superb *Seven Lively Arts* (1924), in which Gilbert Seldes pioneered an appreciation of American popular culture, attributed a Cervantean mode to *Krazy Kat* ("Herriman's mind has always been preoccupied with the mad knight of La Mancha, who reappears transfigured in *Krazy Kat*"), but reserves a Dickensian affinity for *Baron Bean*. Perhaps, as with the musical allusions above, fine-tuning the parallels can get too tenuous: Seldes is certainly correct in noting a similarity to Micawber in the Baron, as well as "Charlie Chaplin as man of the world." Throw in *Don Quixote*—with free-lunch bars and boxing promotion schemes instead of windmills—and you have an approximation of the marvelous personality that George Herriman fashioned in *Baron Bean*.

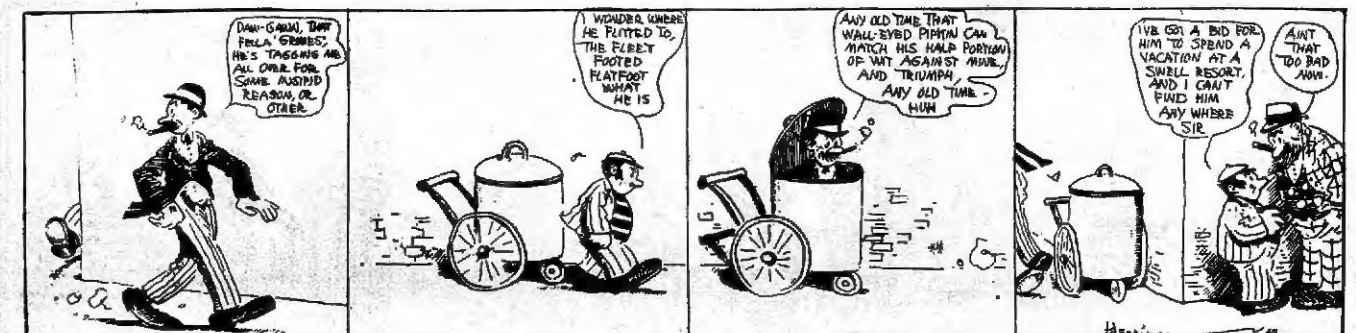
Or you have the following run of daily strips from 1918. Herriman could not resist juxtaposing the Baron's casual megalomania and the perpetual American circus called democratic politics. Before him, Outcault (in *The Yellow Kid*) and Bud Fisher had savaged the process, and masters like Al Capp and Harold Gray were to do it in each in their own ways, in strips afterwards. The Baron's calm assurance of landslide prefigures a recent event. James Earl Carter, after a televised address, thinking the microphones were shut off, self-indulged a typically megalomaniacal observation: "Massive applause... all across America," he envisioned. Like Jimmy Carter, Baron Bean was never out of step; the rest of the world was.

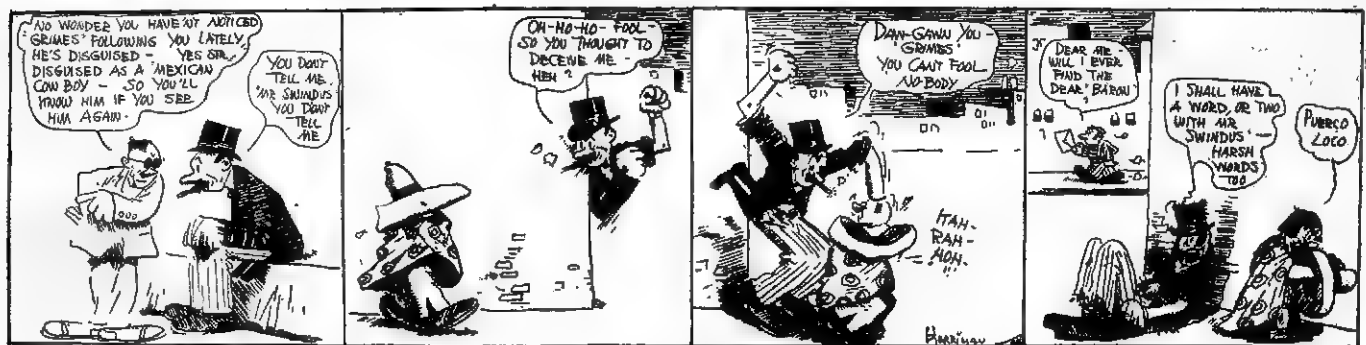
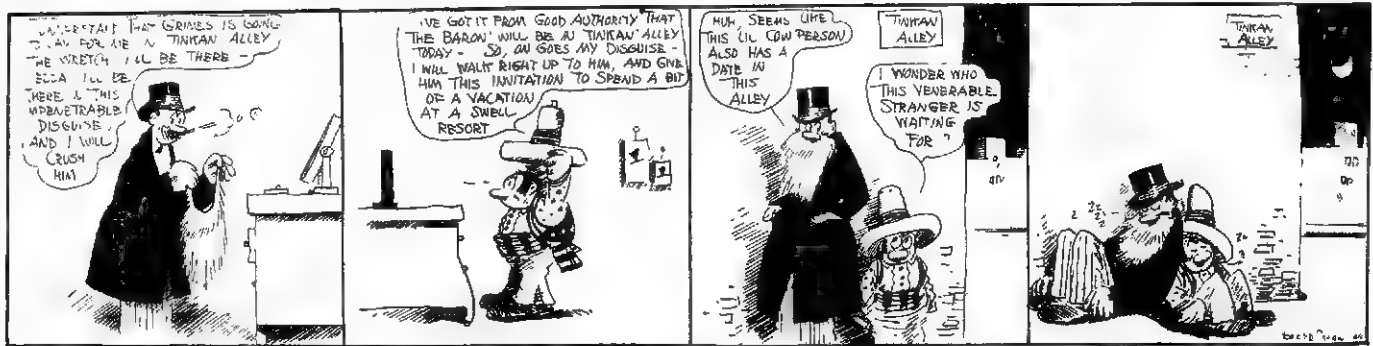
Perhaps the most proper musical metaphor in Baron Bean's case is the march (and marches were very much in order as parts of those rococo serenades). He marched to his own music, at his own pace, in his own parade. He may indeed have been out of step, but thanks to George Herriman, it is great fun to follow those steps.

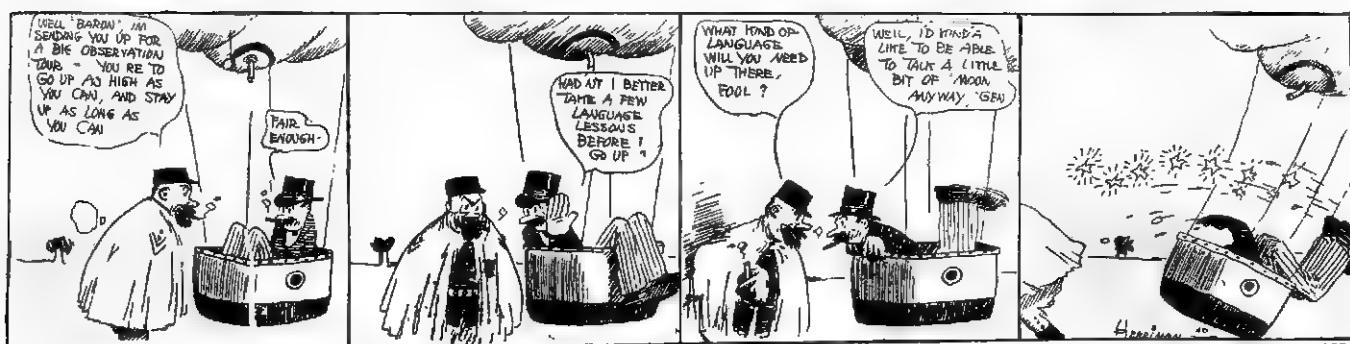
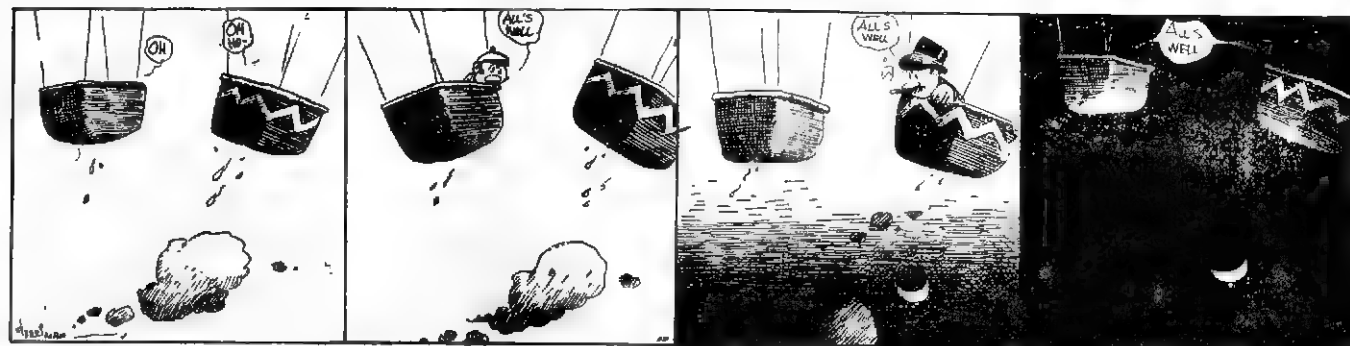
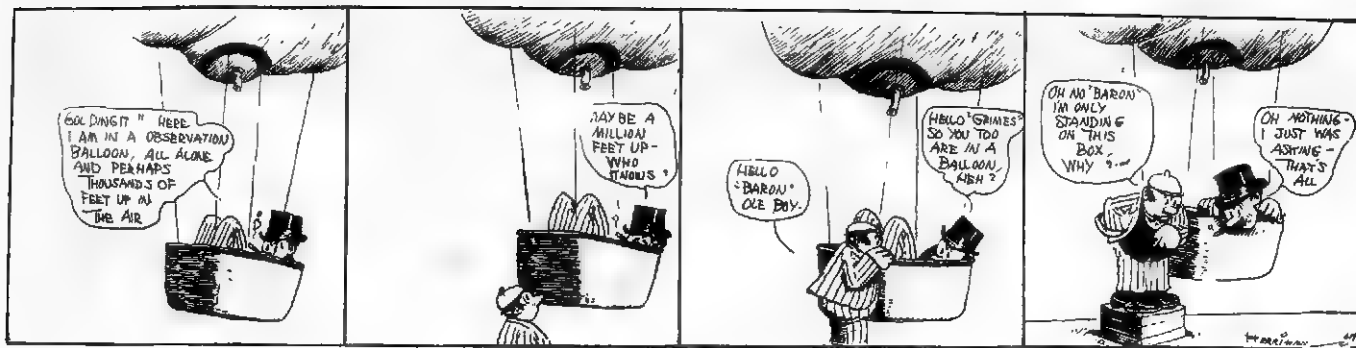












Huck Finn's 100th Birthday

Halley's comet, a 1985 visitor to Earth, also swept by in 1835, the year of Mark Twain's birth. The intermediate visit was in 1910, the year of Twain's death, and as the event approached he reportedly viewed his life as somehow related to the brilliant comet's intersection with Earth's own passage through time and space. Mark Twain was a fatalist as well as a humorist and ironist.

If he were even more of a believer in omens he might have thanked his lucky stars the day he picked up a copy of a fledgling humor magazine called *Life* at about the time he was planning to search for an illustrator of his almost-completed novel *Huckleberry Finn*. It was by no means inevitable that he see a copy of *Life*; the publication was brand new (having debuted in the first week of 1883), had amateurish aspects, and had not yet established a national reputation. By all accounts it was several strata below the leading American humorist. Twain, in fact, never worked for any of the humorous weeklies as did Bill Nye in *Puck* (Twain, rather, wrote for the dignified literary monthlies like the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, the *Century*, and the *North American Review*). And when he declined to contribute to *Judge*, they proudly reproduced his letter, just to display any stitch of Twain for their pages!

But he happened to see a copy of *Life*, and his attention was caught by the cartoons of the young E.W. Kemble. Despite the statement in Kemble's first-person account of illustrating *Huck Finn* that follows, he had been drawing Negro subjects, and in fact what helped make his reputation on *Life* was visual record of the minutes of the Thompson Street Poker Club. This caricatured group of larcenous and altercation-prone blacks was so popular that *Life* collected the series (written by Henry Guy Carleton) in book form.

Although Kemble was not a total unknown—he had had a few drawings published in *Harper's Monthly* in 1880 and adorned the front page of the *New York Graphic* for a stretch—being chosen to illustrate a major novel by America's most prominent humorist, if not the foremost author of any genre, was an unexpected honor. Bill Blackbeard (in his essay in the second American Humorists volume of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*) has amply documented with what disregard book illustrators were often chosen in the 19th century; indeed only Kemble, True Williams, and Dan Beard ever really seemed to do justice to Twain in his dozens of works. Twain's interest in Kemble had to be prodded, and at first he was not completely happy with the work (it seems that Kemble's use of a single model was manifest to Twain), but he soon warmed to the cartoons. In future years Kemble illustrated Twain further, for an expanded anniversary edition of *Huck Finn*, on *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, and for the *Mark Twain Library of Humor*.

Edward Windsor Kemble (1861-1933) was an outstandingly accomplished cartoonist, a technical cousin of A.B. Frost. These penmen (both of whom will be profiled in upcoming *Penmen*

of the *Past* portfolios) broke with prevailing cartoon and illustration techniques to infuse their drawings with animation and vivid personality. It seems certain that illustrating *Huckleberry Finn* merely advanced Kemble's inevitable rise by a few years, and even though the cartoon illustrations are the products of a young pen, they are alive with humor and character—perfect reflections indeed of Twain's remarkable text.

Kemble's reminiscences are taken from the February, 1930, issue of *The Colophon*, and the illustrations herewith are reproduced from the original 1885 American edition of the book. One anecdote, by the way, that Kemble neglects to relate has to do with a near-disaster for Twain and the book. After a few copies had been printed, it was discovered that a gremlin somewhere had altered Kemble's drawing of a male figure to make it lewd and its caption suggestive. The plates were hurriedly fixed at costs of time, trouble, and expense, but disaster was averted. (Actually, financial disaster was merely postponed for Twain. Since 1880 his publishing house had been a burden, and poor investments in typesetting equipment brought bankruptcy in 1894, leading to public offers of charity.)

In any event, it has been neither movie stars nor subsequent illustrators—even Norman Rockwell—who have shaped our perception of American literature's most prominent American boy. It was cartoonist E.W. Kemble, and his account of the experience follows. —R.M.

• Illustrating
Huckleberry Finn
—pg. 16

• An American
Classic
—pg. 19

• Portfolio of
Tom & Huck strips
—pg. 21

GENESIS—It was E.W. Kemble's drawings in *Life*, particularly for the Thompson Street series, that drew Mark Twain's attention to the young cartoonist. This cartoon, from March 6, 1884, features the characters out of their Poker Club setting but displays Kemble's sympathetic cartoon portrayals of the Negro. Depiction of the black escapee Jim was crucial to the illustrating of *Huckleberry Finn*.

N.B.: The editor has been unable to find the boy-and-bee cartoon referred to by Kemble in this article; it did not appear in *Life*. Kemble evidently recalled incorrectly after 46 years.



THE THOMPSON ST. COTERIE, BY PARTICULAR REQUEST, VISITS THE PARK MR. FORTER WILLIAMS UNDERTAKES TO SHOW THEM WHAT CRACK SKATING REALLY IS

Illustrating Huckleberry Finn

By E. W. Kemble

I was a budding cartoonist on the *Daily Graphic* in 1881 when that paper was the only illustrated daily in New York. Newspapers had not begun to publish pictures, and Thomas Nast reigned supreme as the master cartoonist of the country.

Harper's Weekly turned up its dignified nose at this little upstart of a paper, and *Leslie's Weekly* sneered at its impudence. The idea of an illustrated daily! At all events, it did very nicely for a spell, but when the daily newspapers began to use pictures it gave a few convulsive gasps and died.

Then along came *Life*. Its appearance caused the know-alls to stick their tongues in their cheeks and, holding the small publication at arm's length, exclaim, "Ten cents for that? What gall!"

I remember my first visit to the editorial department of this



SOLID COMFORT.

unique publication. John Ames Mitchell was the founder and editor in chief and Henry Guy Carleton was associate editor. Mitchell's studio was used as the office. Between towering rows of returned copies a narrow trail had been cleared, and through this I timidly made my way. Carleton was sitting nearest the door, so I made my entrance speech to him. "Are you the art editor?" Unfortunately he stammered badly, and while he was gathering a reply I sidled in the direction he pointed and repeated by inquiry to the only other visible individual. This was Mitchell, and he also had a slight hesitancy in his delivery, accompanied by a nervous movement of the hands.

I thought they were playing a joke on me and was about to retreat when I was asked to sit down. Then and there began a most pleasant friendship with both men which lasted for years.

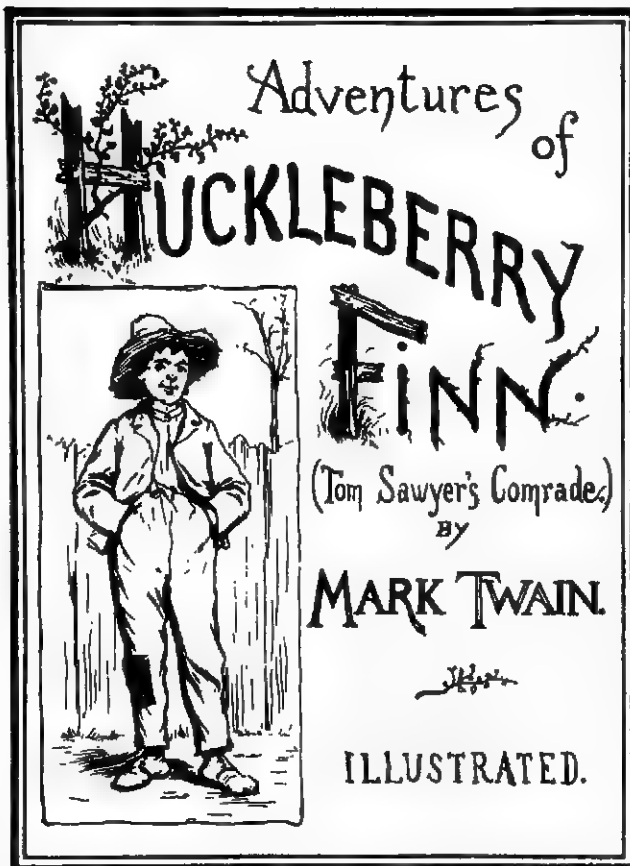
"The Thompson Street Poker Club" by Carleton ran in *Life* for many weeks, and I made the pictures for it. Cyanide Whiffles, Tooter Williams and the other members of the club were types I delighted in portraying.

While contributing to *Life* I made a small picture of a little boy being stung by a bee. Mark Twain had completed the manuscript of *Huckleberry Finn* and had set up a relative, Charles L. Webster, in the publishing business.

Casting about for an illustrator, Mark Twain happened to see this picture. It had action and expression, and bore a strong resemblance to his mental conception of Huck Finn. I was sent for and immediately got in touch with Webster. The manuscript was handed me and the fee asked for—two thousand dollars—was graciously allowed. I had begun drawing professionally two years before this date, and was now at the ripe old age of twenty-three. Homeward I trod with nimble feet—they had really been made nimble by a season's training for the one-hundred and two twenty-yard dashes at the Mott Haven track of the New York Athletic Club. My home was not far from this place and the Harlem River but a short distance beyond, and what a blessing it was to my physical well-being that on my off days I could don running trunks and spiked shoes for an hour of practise sprints, or go to the boat house, array myself in a pair of gorgeous red running trunks and a sleeveless jersey with Mercury's winged foot spread o'er my youthful chest, and get into a racing gig for a pull up the mud-colored waterway.

Now began the important job of getting a model. The story called for a variety of characters, old and young, male and female. In the neighborhood I came across a youngster, Cort Morris by name, who tallied with my idea of Huck. He was a bit tall for the ideal boy, but I could jam him down a few pegs in my drawing and use him for the other characters.

From the beginning I never depended upon models but preferred to pick my types out of the ether, training my mind to visualize them. So I engaged my youthful model, and I remember that from the very start he became immensely popular among his feminine schoolmates as all of his income went for sweetmeats which were duly distributed on his homeward journeys from the seat of learning.



I had a large room in the top of our house which I used as a studio. Here I collected my props for the work. I spent the forenoon completing the drawing, using "Huck" as soon as he was released from school. He was always grinning, and one side of his cheek was usually well padded with a "sour ball" or a huge wad of molasses taffy. Throwing his wool cap and muslin-covered schoolbooks on a lounge, he would ask what was wanted at this session. I would designate the character. "We will do the old woman who spots Huck as he is trying to pass for a girl." Donning an old sunbonnet and slipping awkwardly into a faded skirt, Cort would squat on a low splint-bottomed chair and become the most woebegone female imaginable. Forthwith he would relieve his extended cheek of its burden of taffy with a mighty gulp. I would make a simple outline sketch on yellow toned paper and then take a rest, during which Cort would pop a "cocoanut strip" into his grinning mouth.

For the King, Cort wore an old frock coat and padded his waist line with towels until he assumed the proper rotundity. Then he would mimic the sordid old reprobate and twist his boyish face into the most outlandish expressions. If I could have drawn the grimaces as they were I would have had a convulsing collection of comics, but these would not have jibed with the text, and I was forced to forego them.

I used my young model for every character in the story—man, woman and child. Jim the Negro seemed to please him the most. He would jam his little black wool cap over his head, shoot out his lips and mumble coon talk all the while he was posing. Grown to manhood, "Huck" is now a sturdy citizen of Philadelphia, connected with an established business house.

This Negro Jim, drawn from a white schoolboy, with face unblackened, started something in my artistic career. Several advance chapters of *Huckleberry Finn* were published in the *Century Magazine*, then under the able editorship of Richard Watson Gilder and a select staff of assistants. My picture caught the fancy of Mr. Gilder and W. Lewis Frazer, the art director. I was asked to call and exhibit my wares. I went to *Life* and borrowed a few originals, but not one picture contained a Negro type.

"We want to see some of your Negro drawings," Mr. Frazer said. "I have none," I replied. "I've never made any until this one in *Huck Finn*."

The art editor looked dubious. "I have several stories I would like to have you illustrate, but they are all of the South."

"Let me try," I urged, "and if they do not suit the text you need not use or pay for them."

I made the drawings. Mr. Frazer nodded his head as he looked at them. "I guess they'll go. We'll strike off some proofs and send them to the authors and see what they say."

The proofs were sent and soon came back with the stamp of approval. One author went so far as to declare: "At last you have an artist who knows the South." I had, up to that time, never been further south than Sandy Hook. My coons caught



"A FAIR FIT."



THEY FOUND EIGHT DOLLARS.

the public fancy. The *Century* then engaged me to work exclusively for their magazine. This continued for several years, and all the stories from those charming writers of the South, Thomas Nelson Page, James Allen, Harry Stilwell Edwards, Richard Malcom Johnson and George W. Cable, were placed in my hands for picture work. I was established as a delineator of the South, the Negro being my specialty, and, as I have mentioned, I had never been South at all. I didn't go for two years more. Then I told Mr. Gilder that it was high time for me to go and see what the real article looked like. He agreed with me. After visiting several plantations and noting the local color, a thing I had missed but had not attempted to carry out to any extent in my pictures, I found that my types were, in most cases, the counterparts of those surrounding me. I had seen the Negro of the city but he was a different bird from the plantation product, both in carriage and dress. It all seems so strange to me now, that a single subject, a Negro, drawn from a pose given me by a lanky white schoolboy, should have started me on a career that has lasted for forty-five years, especially as I had no more desire to specialize in that subject than I had in the Chinaman or the Malay pirate.

Years later I sat beside Mark Twain at a luncheon in the home of Mrs. Clarence Mackay. I had not seen him in all the intervening years. His face bore no trace of the siege he had been through when the firm of Charles L. Webster went bankrupt and he began his lecture tour, paying back every dollar of the indebtedness. We fell to talking of the past—its writers and illustrators. Abbey had never been equaled, he contended. His delightful drawings for Herrick's *Poems*, for *She Stoops to Con-*

quer and *The Quiet Life* stamped him as a master of his craft. Frost stood alone in his humor. There were Smedley, Reinhart and Remington a little group of shining lights undimmed by time. We spoke of Huck Finn and I told him of my model and of the various uses to which I had put him. He seemed greatly amused and wanted me to enlighten him about my beginnings as an illustrator.



"PAP."

From the early childhood I had kept a pencil busy night and day when freed from the irksome task of home study, which I thoroughly abhorred, drawing anything that tickled my fancy—soldiers, Indians, long processions of circus parades. These I would cut out with scissors and place on a seam in the carpet, where they would stretch from wall to wall, and woe betide any one who disarranged this imposing aggregation. My mother was the principal offender, for the long skirts of that day swept my creations into discordant combinations. Then came boarding-school, where I indulged in caricatures of the teachers. School days over, I had several small positions at office work, capped with an all-important job in the Western Union Telegraph Company. In the auditor's department I toyed with long rows of figures until I could see them at night crawling over the bedspread.

Whilst engaged in guarding the finances of this important institution I spent my evenings drawing various whims and fancies. My father suggested that I think up some timely ideas, do them in ink and take them to some periodical. I made four

small comics, signed my name in a conspicuous place on each sketch, and, on the following day, sallied forth at the luncheon hour to the house of Harper & Brothers in Franklin Square. Up the winding iron stairway I climbed and sought the art department, a small boxed-in enclosure presided over by Charles Parsons. Standing with hat in one hand and my boyish attempt at humor in the other, I waited patiently for the elderly gentleman in charge to address me. He looked up from a desk piled high with art and beckoned me. I gave him the package and was told to call in a few days and he would enlighten me as to their availability.

I went back to my desk and dismissed the sketches from my mind. Several days later, while indulging in my noonday feast—a plate of roast beef, mashed potatoes, bread and butter, all for fifteen cents at Smith and McNeel's Restaurant on Fulton Street—I remembered my drawings. "A few days" had passed. The meal was rapidly disposed of and I hastened to the publishing house to learn the verdict. Maybe they would give me a dollar or two for one of them. (My salary at the Western Union was ten dollars a week.)

Up the spiral stairway I went with dubious forebodings; in a mild and timid tone I half whispered my request that I had come for my sketches.

"What name?" the director asked me. I gulped and murmured "Kemble."

"Oh, yes," he replied. "You don't wish them all home with you, do you?" He smiled, and going to his desk, wrote something on a printed slip and handed it to me. "If you will take that to the cashier on the main floor he will give you the money. It is for seventy dollars." How I got down the circular iron stairway I have never been able to learn—whether I slid, tumbled or jumped. The cashier, a beetle-browed individual, glared at me, wrote something in a large book, came out from his cage-like enclosure and directed me to sign on the dotted line. Then he went back to his cage and through a tiny window poked seventy dollars in gold at me.

I pocketed my treasure and went back to my work. Every column I added up that afternoon seemed to have a seven in the total. I was reprimanded by the auditor for my carelessness. That evening, for fear that I would be robbed I ignored bus and street car and walked the entire distance from Vesey Street to Forty-third, where I lived. The following week I resigned my mathematical position and joined the *Daily Graphic* as a staff artist.

The marvelous methods of an art department of that period are worth recording. A spacious loft on the top floor of the *Graphic* plant served as the studio. Some ten budding geniuses were seated at tables where their shares in the pictorial features were given them by the art director. Each man was more or less a specialist in his particular line. Gray Parker did horses and social events. Cusaks, a Spaniard, did any old thing and sang snatches from "Carmen" while doing it. Zenope, a Turk, did portraits and delivered monologues of children reciting bits from their Sunday-school lessons. C.J. Taylor, long and lanky, with spreading side-whiskers, did cartoons and street scenes. I was cartoonist and character artist. George B. Luks was a contributor and did wonderful song and dance acts for us whenever he paid a visit to the sanctum. If the West Point cadets were to parade on the following day, a full page spread had to be done the day before. The reviewing stand was put in by one man, the cadets drawn by the military genius, the mayor and his guests inserted by the portrait man, and then the whole masterpiece was pieced together and made ready for the photographer in an adjoining room. The thing that always bothered us most was the weather forecast. We would wait until the last minute and if a report came from the weather bureau announcing "rain tomorrow," the rain specialist, who was skilled at making an open umbrella from a bird's eye point of view, covered the whole opus with his product. Completed, the plate was made and the paper went to bed, and invariably the day of the parade just reeked with sunshine.

Huckleberry Finn was filmed a few years ago, and the director, the lamented William Desmond Taylor, who was mysteriously murdered in Hollywood soon after the picture was released, took a copy of the original edition and made his characters fit my drawings. I had not seen the book in years, and as my characters appeared on the screen, resembling my types so faithfully, even as to pose, my mind ran back to the lanky boy who posed for me and the pride I had felt in doing my first book.

An American Classic And A Classic Comic Strip

By Rick Marschall

[Huckleberry Finn] is, I believe, not only the greatest work of the imagination yet produced in America; it is the one most likely to endure. For there is in it every quality that makes for permanent fame. It is a profound study of a people and an age, and yet it is transparently simple. It is full of high romance, and yet it is baldly true. It has a superb artfulness in every line, and yet it carries a disarming air of the casual, almost of the impromptu... When [Twain] came to the last word of Huck he had written his ticket to immortality. Into it he had got Everybody—and Everybody is with us always, and is always the same age."

—H.L. Mencken

This year marks a set of interesting and coincidental anniversaries: the 150th year since Mark Twain's birth; the 100th birthday of *Huckleberry Finn*'s publication; and the 75th anniversary of Twain's death. It is the centennial of Huck Finn with which we are concerned this issue.

Huck Finn is a remarkable creation in American letters. He is the prototypical American boy, surpassing all other figures in literature, cinema, and the comics. His chronicle, by Mark Twain, is an American epic, arguably the most American of all novels; Huck, unrestrained but contemplative, is a type of America itself, and the River is a symbol of life. (Or—*Huck Finn* is an engaging narrative full of fun, pathos, irony, and poetry. As Twain warned, "persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot;" and I will let it lie.) By any measure the book is a wellspring and a touchstone both, and, after a century, Huck himself is an icon in our national consciousness; he remains an image to the world almost as familiar—certainly as distinctively native—as Uncle Sam.

After 100 years Mark Twain's genius is as fresh as ever. The imagery in *Huckleberry Finn* virtually sings. The setting still seems real, and we genuinely share Huck's alternating childhood moods of joy, loneliness, comradeship, anger, and confusion. The humor in outrageous character types has not faded through the years, nor have the evocative paeans to the Mississippi River. Curiously, sadly, the reaction to *Huckleberry Finn* has changed little in a century. A hundred years ago there were attempts to ban the book for its coarse aspects and "nigger-loving" attitude. Today there are active movements throughout America to ban *Huck Finn* from libraries and schools for its historical depiction of blacks. One suspects the shade of Twain, eternal ironist and born-again cynic, looks upon this situation with more resignation than surprise.

Mark Twain worked on *Huckleberry Finn* for more than eight years. It was earthier than its companion volume *Tom Sawyer* (1876),

although its literary purpose was clearly different; Huck, too, was earthier than Tom. *Tom Sawyer* was a story for boys, but *Huck Finn* was also a story for all America—a tribute to her glories and an indictment of her shame—and, indeed, a story for the ages.

The ages (censorship attempts aside) have already been kind to Twain's classic, at least in the modern American sense of adaptations being the sincerest form of flattery. There have been several movie versions of *Huck Finn*; a television drama special and season series; a new mini-series slated for broadcast on cable TV; and the 1985 Tony-winning Broadway musical, Roger Miller's *Big River*.

Also there was a *Huck Finn* comic strip. Unknown even to most Twain scholars—who are formally meeting in societies with increasing and admirable frequency—*Tom Sawyer* and *Huck Finn* was drawn by the inimitable Dwig. Clare Victor Dwiggins (see a profile of Bill—*A Boy's Diary* in NEMO No. 11) was frequently referred to as "The Mark Twain of American Cartooning" and was a nonpareil chronicler of small-town life and boyhood preoccupations. Of rural background and carefree, almost vagabond, upbringing, Dwig himself might have been imagined by Mark Twain. Clearly the alliance of Tom and Huck and Dwig was providential.

The strip began in 1918 with the official blessing of Twain's commercial successors. "Copyright Clara Clemens Gabrilo-witsch" every strip's legend ran, referring to Twain's daughter; "by permission of the estate of Samuel L. Clemens and the Mark Twain Co." The syndicate was the McClure Company, which in 1918 (the year of the strip's debut) was fresh from reorganization.

In a sense McClure was the first of the newspaper syndicates, as McClure had begun syndicating fiction to dailies in 1884. By 1901 he had expanded his operation to include color comic strips, and under a dizzying array of copyright registrants—S.S. McClure, R.B. McClure, Otis F. Wood, C.J. Hirt—his company



produced two separate color comic sections each week for years, with some of the finest talent of the day. Today much of this work is forgotten, largely because McClure served rural papers that couldn't afford their own color presses, but some of the artists included Billy Marriner, Ed Carey, Carl Anderson, H.C. Greening, and even George Herriman. In the mid-teens the syndicate was running *Sambo and His Funny Noises* by Pat Sullivan (of later Felix the Cat fame), a Charlie Chaplin strip by Ed Carey, the popular *Dinkelspiels* by Harry Westerman, and Dwig's *Wanted: Home for A Baby*. The McClures, however, surrendered their syndicate operation in 1916. A revived syndicate with the same name in turn revived C.W. Kahles's recently retired *Hairbreadth Harry*, and soon Dwig returned to the fold with the *Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn* strip.

The feature had a healthy list of newspapers, most of which ran the Sunday in full color. There was also a daily strip for a time, a reprint book in 1925, and a board game fashioned on Dwig's images and manufactured by Stoll and Edwards. Around 1923 the strip became *The School Days of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn*, and by 1928 was transformed to just plain *School Days*. A Tom remained, but the rest of the Twain characters, premise—and, of course, the imprimatur—had disappeared. Within two years Dwig was drawing the delightful Sunday page for the Ledger Syndicate.

Although Huck was the guiding presence in the strip—a hooky-playing, bucolic muse to the other boys—the flavor was more of *Tom Sawyer*. The earlier work of Twain was certainly lighter, and this was reflected in Dwig's endless variations on pranks, fishing, courting, games, trades of marbles for tops, chores, and telling white lies to Aunt Polly and the teacher. If the two Twain books be compared (and naturally they should be), polite society's contradictions were expiated—even exorcised—by the death of Injun Joe in *Tom Sawyer*; in *Huck Finn*, although Huck accepted "going to Hell" as the price for assisting an escaped slave, society's contradictions were ongoing: Hypocrisy as a permanent state. Twain's changing social outlook, including a growing cynicism, firmer atheism, a maturing social conscience, and nagging self-doubts, are virtually co-incident with the planning of *Huckleberry Finn* as he was ending *Tom Sawyer*.

But, as we say, such deeper currents were never seen under Dwig's surface; it was not his purpose. He added a few of his own characters to Twain's, some of whom were regular cast members of other Dwig features through the years. Prominent among these was Ophelia, the cross-eyed wise fool of a girl, she of the slate with the chalk-smudged wisdom that often formed an apostrophe to Sunday episodes. Neighborhood guys included Dwig's J. Filliken Wilburfloss, the sissy, and Pip Quint, the bully. Aunt Polly was present in Dwig's version, and so was Becky Thatcher, but one character was conspicuous by its absence: the river. Substituted, frequently, were the swimming- and fishing-holes, but the majesty and more profound implications of the river—as a locale and as a device—were missing. But this, too, one feels, was a conscious bit of direction by Dwig and perhaps by the Twain estate. Dwig's strip meant to focus on the life of boys in a rural town (and Twain/Dwig in the *Tom Sawyer* mode did it better than anyone else) rather than engage in continuity adventures in outward directions from that setting. For all the charm and native humor and historical realism of this strip, one may wistfully imagine the wonder that Twain/Dwig in the purer *Huck Finn* mode might have spun.

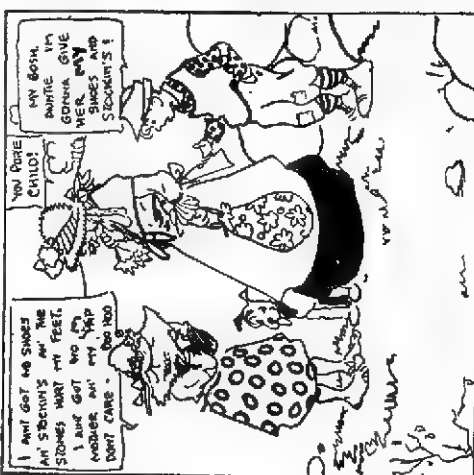
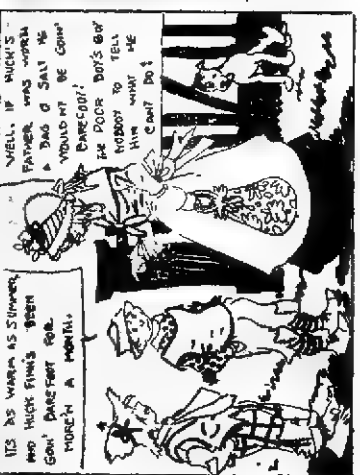


Nevertheless here is Huck Finn, a playful will o' the wisp forever on his way to the fishing hole. Here is Tom Sawyer, figuring trades and ways to impress Becky and fool Aunt Polly. Here is Mark Twain, creating a cast of characters that are simple yet memorable. Here, too, is Clare Victor Dwiggins, a poet of boyhood joys and a vanished rural American life.

And here is *Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn*, 100 years after Huck's own adventures commenced, in a charming comic-strip chronicle. Seen for the first time in 60-odd years, these pages are a vital link in a special American literary tradition, and are important pieces of Americana. More, they are important pieces of America.



This is the actual home of Huck Finn—Hannibal, Mo., sketched from a photograph taken by Albert Bigelow Paine for his "Life of Mark Twain", published by Harper & Bros.



The Wheeling Register.

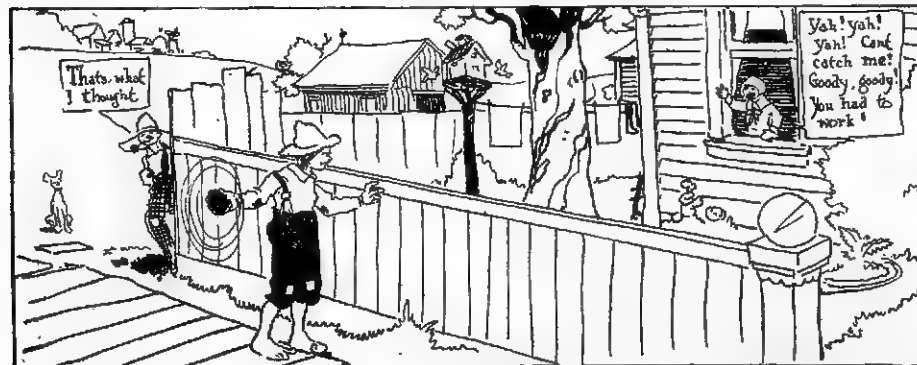
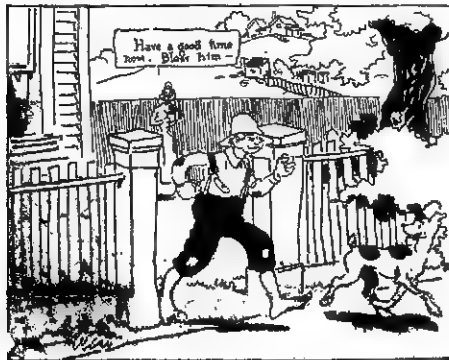
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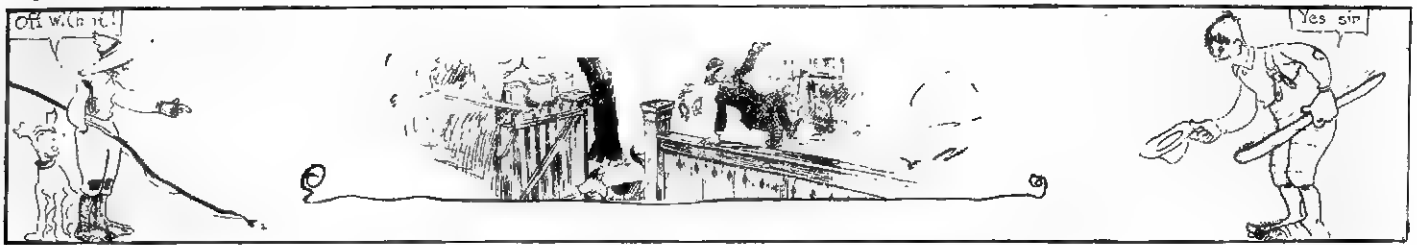
TOM SAWYER and HUCK FINN

Pictured by
Clare Victor Dwiggins

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Business Before Pleasure





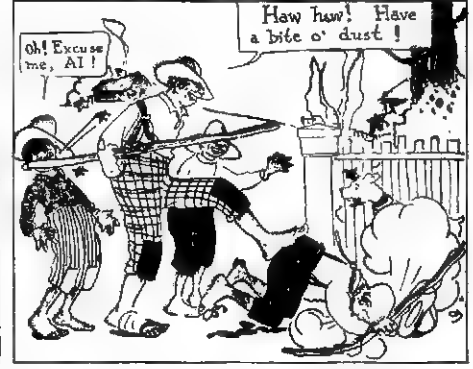
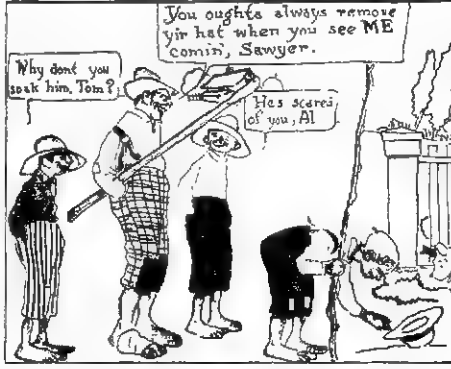
TOM SAWYER and HUCK FINN

taured by

Clare Victor Dwiggins

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David and Goliath



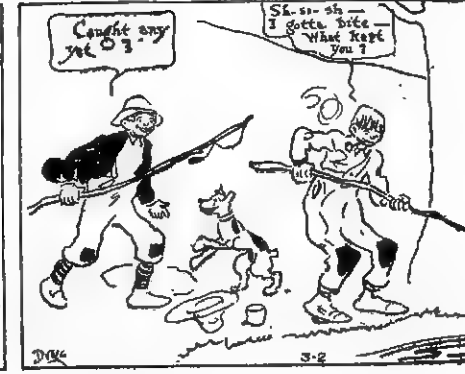
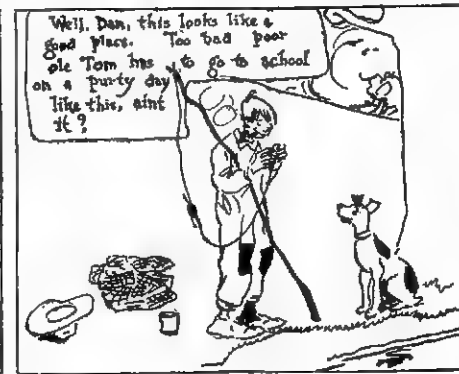


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TOM SAWYER and HUCK FINN

Pictured by
CLARE VICTOR DWIGGINS

The Call of the Harbingers.



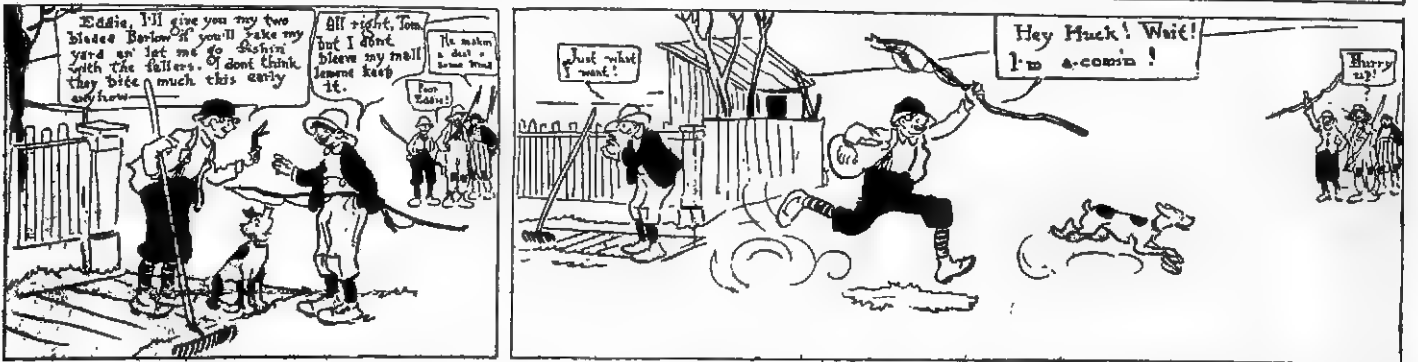


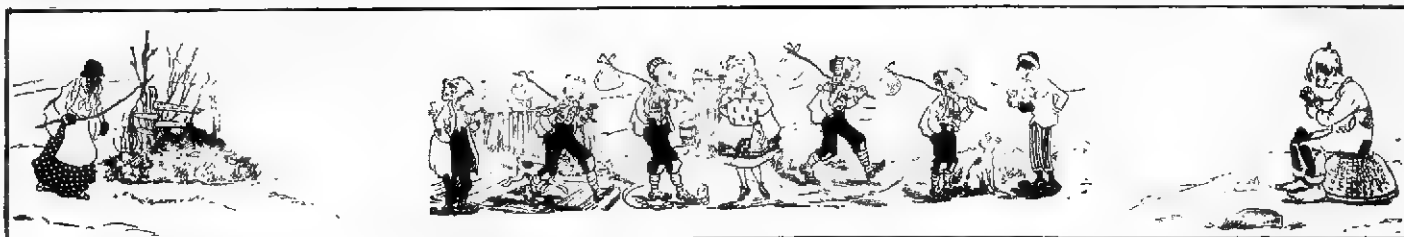
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TOM SAWYER and HUCK FINN

Illustrated by
CLARE VICTOR DWIGGINS

In the Marts of Trade.





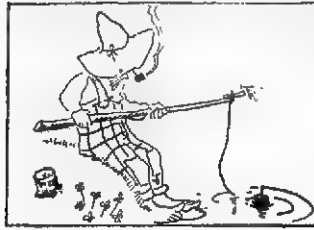
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TOM SAWYER and HUCK FINN

Pictured by
CLARE VICTOR DWIGGINS
The McClure Newspaper Syndicate

Great Minds All Run in the Same Direction. If It Leads to the Fishin' Hole.



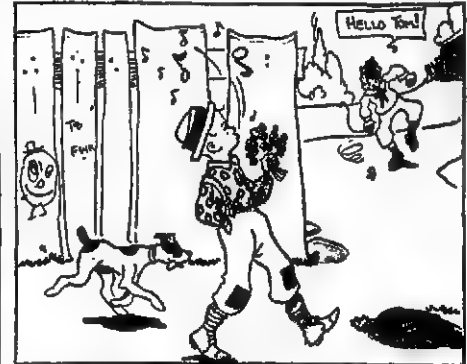


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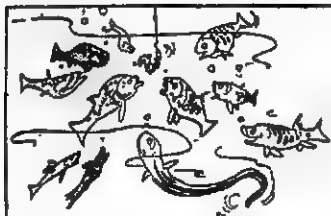
TOM SAWYER and HUCK FINN

Illustrated by
CLARE VICTOR DWIGGINS
The Modern Magazine Company

Stubbin' Your Toe Ain't So Bad, If You Don't Fall Into a Mudpuddle.



COLOR SECTION



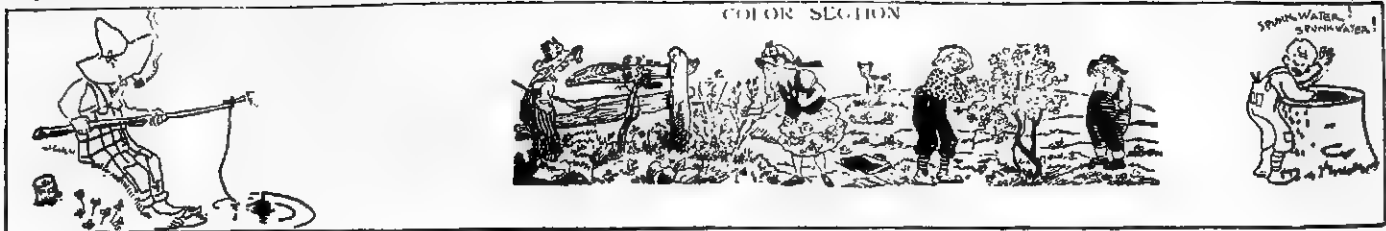
TOM SAWYER and HUCK FINN

Illustrated by
CLARE VICTOR DWIGGINS
The Chicago Magazine Company

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Hurray! Huck's Converted!

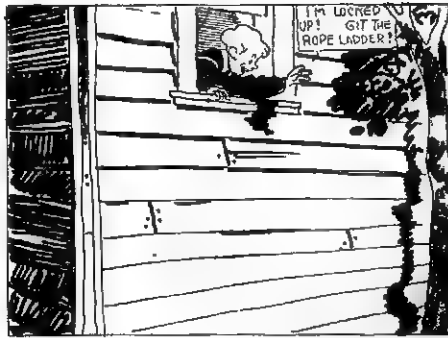
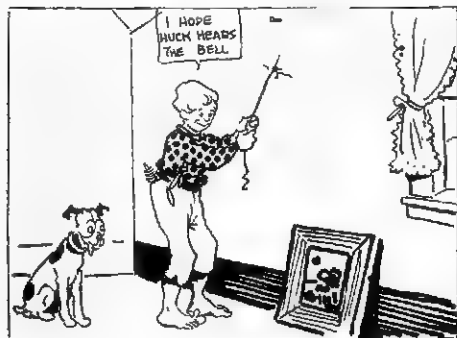
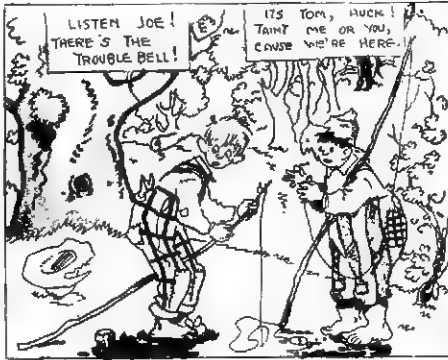




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TOM SAWYER and HUCK FINN

Illustrated by
CLARE VICTOR DWIGGINS
The Motion Picture Artist





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TOM SAWYER and HUCK FINN

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The Madison Magazine Syndicate

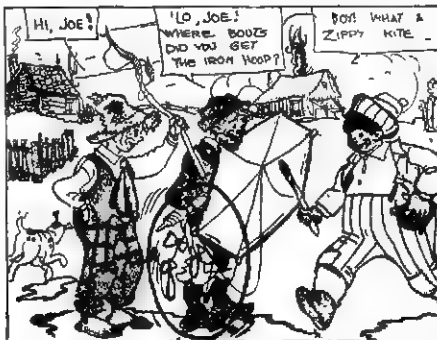
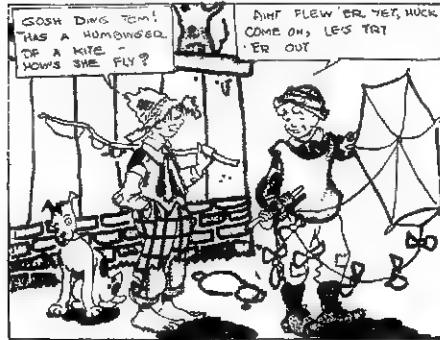




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TOM SAWYER and HUCK FINN

Illustrated by
CLARE VICTOR DWIGGINS
The Modern Bookman Studio





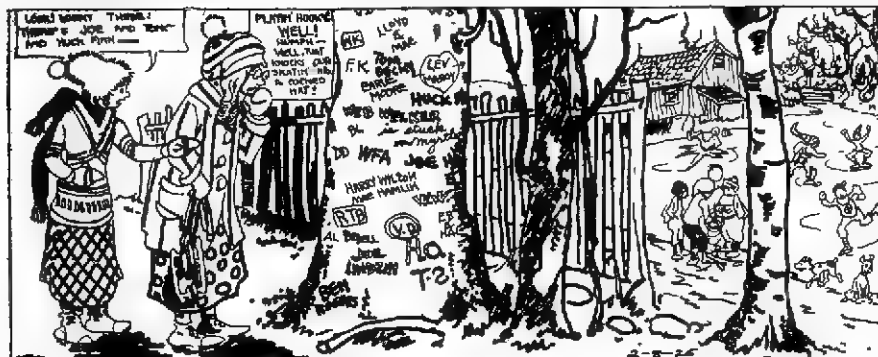
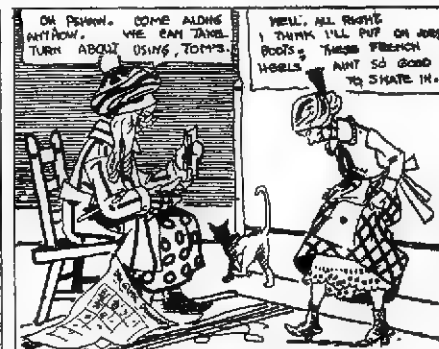
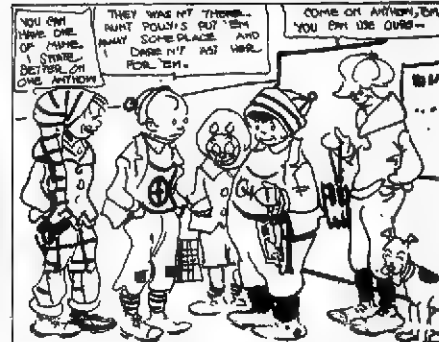
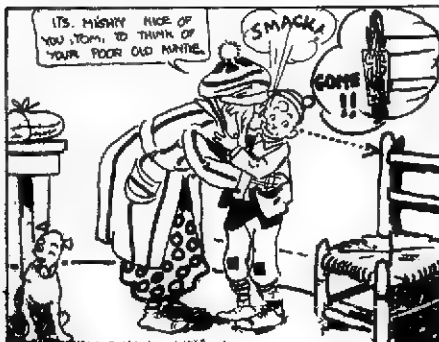
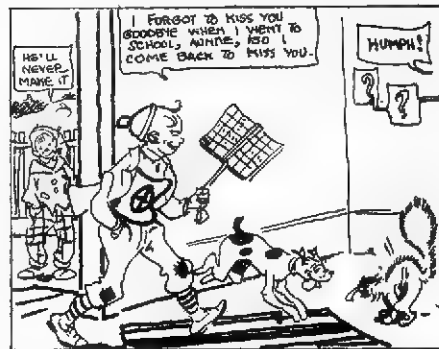
Sunday, February 8, 1925.

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THE SCHOOL DAYS OF TOM SAWYER and HUCK FINN

Illustrated by
CLARE VICTOR DWIGGINS
The National Newspaper Syndicate

It's Purty Hard To Lick A Boy For Doing What You Tried To Do Yourself



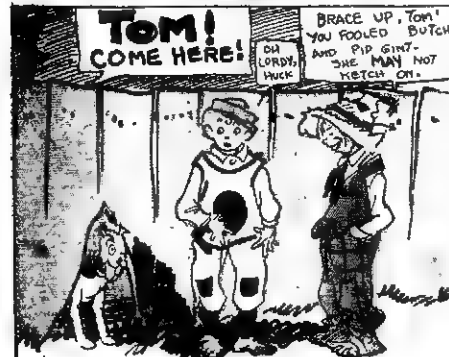
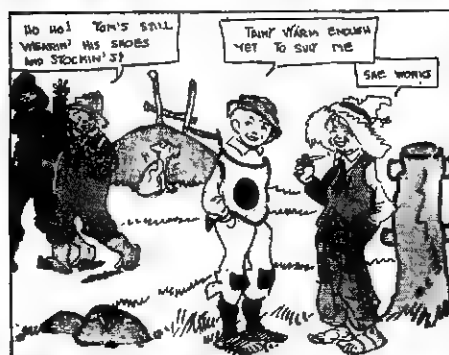


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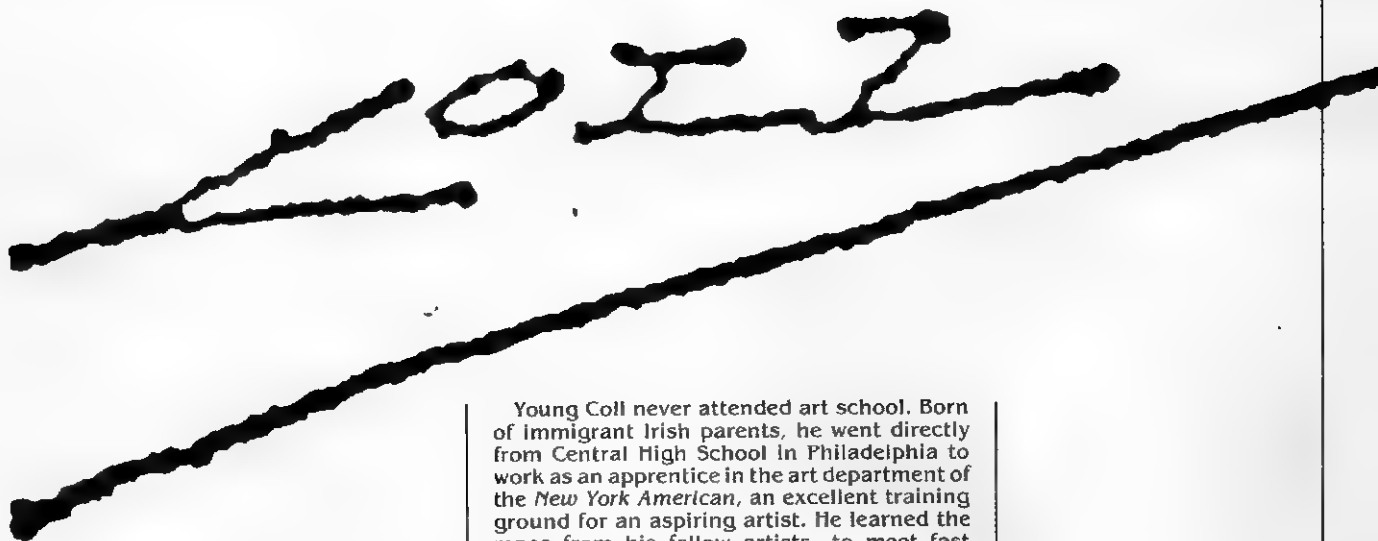
THE SCHOOL DAYS OF TOM SAWYER and HUCK FINN

Illustrated by
CLARE VICTOR DWIGGINS
The McGraw-Hill Company

Tom Is As Slick As Sandpaper When It Comes To Fooling Aunt Polly.



Penmen Of The Past



The highest accolade that can be paid to an illustrator is the admiration of his professional peers. This has nothing to do with public response, the size of the fees received, or even the opinion of professional art critics. Joseph Clement Coll (1881-1921) was an "illustrator's illustrator," and his work has been admired and emulated by other pen and ink artists ever since it first appeared on the pages of the obscure newspaper supplement, *Associated Sunday Magazines*, in the early 1900s.

Young Coll never attended art school. Born of immigrant Irish parents, he went directly from Central High School in Philadelphia to work as an apprentice in the art department of the *New York American*, an excellent training ground for an aspiring artist. He learned the ropes from his fellow artists—to meet fast deadlines and to work in pen and ink which, because it reproduced well on the rough newsprint surface, was the preferred drawing medium. In this field Coll followed other Philadelphia artists such as William Glackens, Everett Shinn, John Sloan, and George Luks, who later became the nucleus of the famous "Ash Can School," or "The Eight."

Coll had a precocious talent which was very soon recognized by his employers. They sent him to their Chicago paper to develop his work further and by 1901, when he was only 20, he returned to Philadelphia as a fully seasoned





ABOVE: J.C. Coll in his studio.

artist, to join the staff of the *North American*. Here he began drawing amazingly skillful pen and ink renditions that set his work apart from all others'. Greatly influenced by the Spanish master of pen and ink Daniel Vierge and by Coll's American idols, Edwin Austin Abbey and Howard Pyle, he developed his own sparkling style with rich blacks, large white areas and an incredible variety of lines, hatches, and cross hatches, to indicate changes of value, dis-

tance, and texture.

Coll's pen and ink renderings, although they look completely spontaneous, were in reality built on a very carefully worked-out series of preparatory stages. First and most important was his picture concept; Coll's daughter remembers that as a child she was never allowed to disturb him during this thinking stage. In fact, to shut out all distractions he sometimes covered his head with a blanket, sitting in black silence.

Once his picture idea was devised, he then posed models in the various attitudes required. From the models he made careful drawings on tracing paper in pencil, recording all details of anatomy, costume, and light and shadow. These were then foreshortened or otherwise adapted to fit his predetermined composition (many of the poses were beyond the abilities of the models to take). The tissues were then traced onto a Bristol board or other surface for the inking.

Even this final stage was not left to chance. Coll used warm-up sheets of paper to get his pen strokes flowing easily and tried out many passages, heads, or folds in a costume, for instance, to find the most effective manner for rendering them. Once Coll was at work on the final drawing, his hand was swift and sure. The compositional and technical problems had all been solved and he had only to concentrate on his technique.

Beyond Coll's technique, however, was his fantastic imagination. His pictures were never conventional. He would adopt an unexpected point of view, an off-beat interpretation of a character, or a dramatic piece of action from the manuscripts he illustrated, the end result being to compel the viewer to read the story to find out what was going on. Many of the techniques he developed have since been repeated endlessly by adventure strip artists such as Alex Raymond, Austin Briggs, Milton Caniff, Noel Sickles and their followers.

Eventually Coll became a free-lance artist, accepting work from many national magazines. For years he was a mainstay at *Coller's Weekly*, most often as the interpreter of the famous *Fu Manchu* stories by Sax Rohmer. He was also an excellent illustrator for the best mystery writers, including Edgar Wallace, Talbot Mundy, and Melville Davisson Post. Among other major writers he illustrated were Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (*Sir Nigel and The Lost World*), Charles Dickens, Achmed Abdullah, Arthur Crabb, and John Russell. He also illustrated a long series of Irish stories by Maude Radford Warren and Seumas MacManus and another series of the *Gallopink Dick—Stories of an English Highwayman* by H.B. Marriott Watson for the Associated Sunday Magazines.

Reproductions of such illustrations were clipped and filed for reference by many of Coll's fellow artists. The survival of so many of these well-worn and tattered clippings attests to the great influence he had on a whole generation of artists when pen and ink was the dominant medium.

Coll was productive to the end of his life, cut short early at the age of 41 from a fatal attack of appendicitis. While he would surely have gone on to produce more and even greater pictures, the legacy we have is a rich one that deserves far greater recognition.

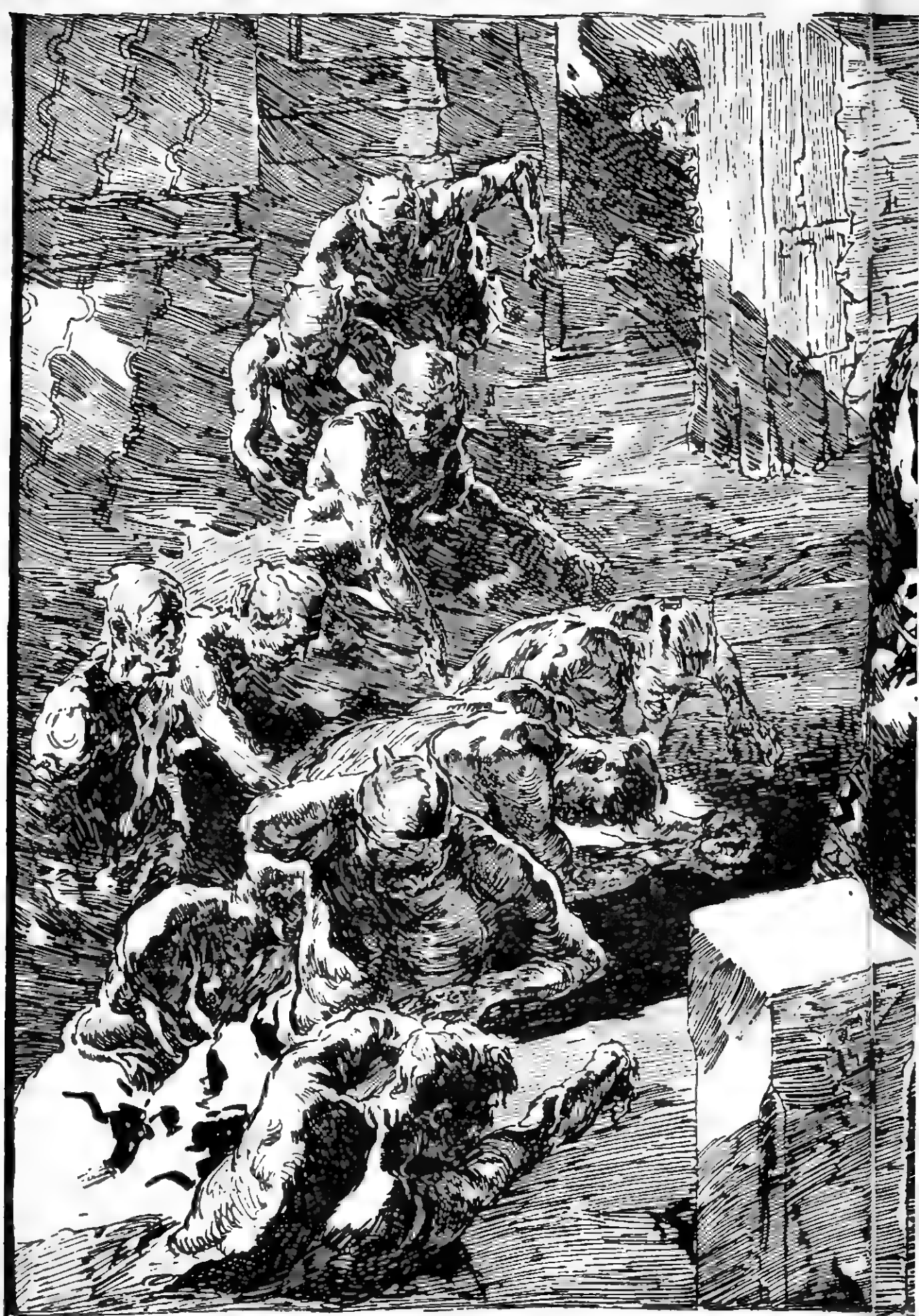
—Walt and Roger Reed.

Editor's Note: A book, *The Magic Pen of Joseph Clement Coll*, compiled by Walt Reed, was published in 1978. A few remaining copies of the limited edition may be purchased from the publisher, Donald M. Grant, West Kingdon, Rhode Island 02892.



I SWUNG AT THE LADDER'S END BY MY HANDS ONLY, MAKING GREAT TRANSVERSE SWEEPS,
LIKE THE WEIGHT AT THE BOTTOM OF A PENDULUM.

OTHERS SPRANG
FORWARD,
CLAMORING,
BESEECHING,
SOME SHAKING
THEIR FISTS
UNDER HIS FACE
AND OTHERS
CLUTCHING AT
HIS UNIFORM.



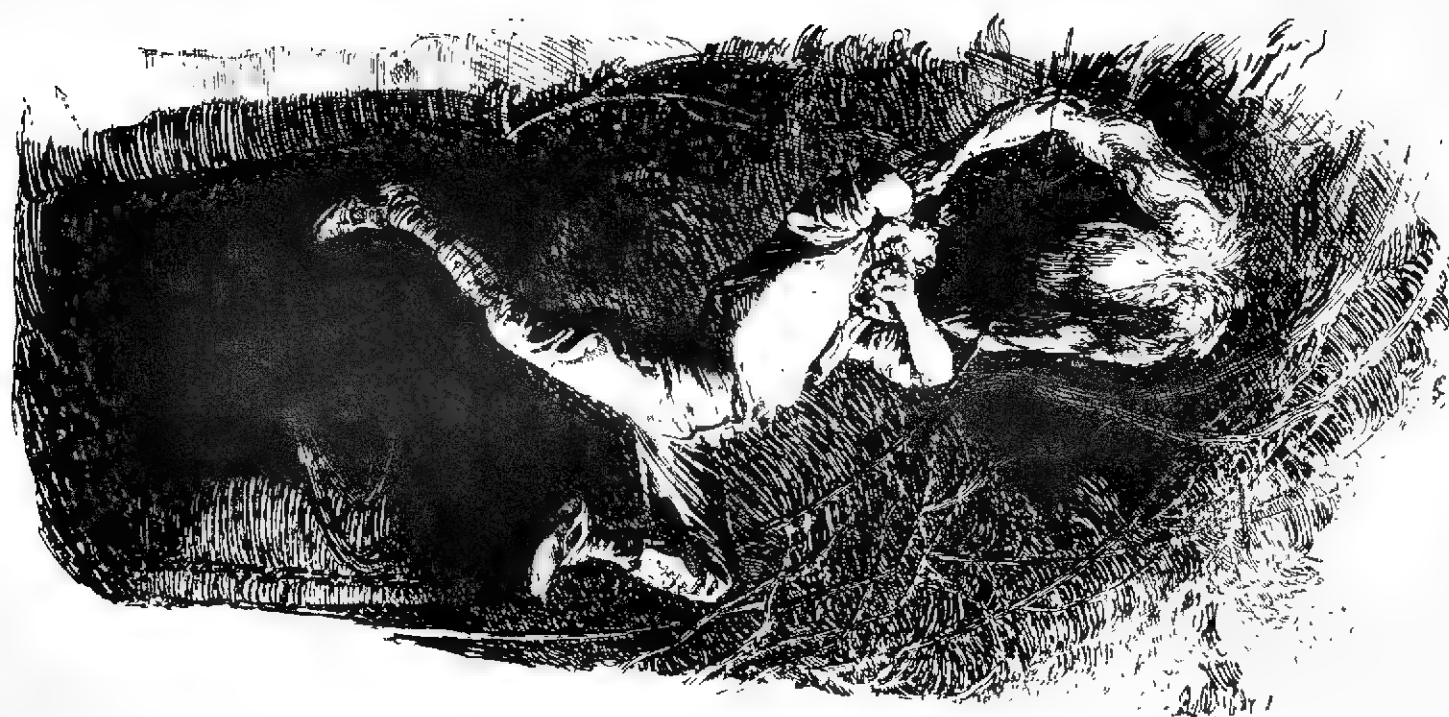
MEHEMET
SHRUGGED HIS
SHOULDERS.
THERE WAS
NOTHING OF
MALICE IN HIS
DEMEANOR.
BUT THEY MIGHT
AS WELL HAVE
PLEADED WITH
A ROCK.







on the
bottom step of the stair,
facing me, stood Dr. Fu-Manchu







OUT OF THE CROWD LEAPED AN OLD MAN WITH FLOWING HAIR AND BEARD HE STOOD
IN THE COURT AND SHOOK HIS FIST AT THE TEMPLE DOME.

"WO TO YOU, ACCURSED CITY!" HE SCREAMED. "WO TO YOU IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT!
WO TO YOUR WHITES AND HARLOTS WHEN THE JUDGMENT COMES!"



Not until he saw his
shadow drifting across
a cool white boulder did
he realize that he had
become—a fish.



CORTO MALTESE.

ESCONDIDA 1914

South
Pacific

The Great European Comic Heroes

by R. J. M. Lofficier and Fred Patten

Corto Maltese

The Life and Times of Corto Maltese, Gentleman of Fortune

Corto Maltese is, without a doubt, one of the best loved comics characters in the world. He rivals Superman, Tintin, and Asterix in popularity; his adventures have been translated into more than a dozen languages. There has been an animated *Corto Maltese* television series, and even serious talk of a live-action *Corto Maltese* picture.

Like Sherlock Holmes or Tarzan, Corto Maltese is one of those fictional characters whose life seems to take a reality of its own; after reading his adventures, one finds it hard to believe that he has not really lived. Fans have published essays about Corto's ancestry, or places where he has been, and recently a book was published that tried to piece Corto's life story together.

Corto Maltese's creator is the Italian artist Hugo Pratt. Pratt was born in 1927 of a French father of English origin, and an Italian mother. He lived in Venice until he was 10, when he moved to Ethiopia, at the time an Italian colony; and after World War II, he returned to Venice. All these childhood travels, as well as his assiduous reading of American comic strips such as *Tim Tyler's Luck*, would later influence Pratt's own work.

In 1945, Pratt launched his comics career when he co-created a masked superhero, *The Ace of Spades*. In 1946, he created *Junglemen*. Then, in 1950, he moved to Argentina at the suggestion of Publisher Cesare Civita. It is there that Pratt created some of his most popular series, such as the Western *Sgt. Kirk*. In 1953; the adventures of a war correspondent *Ernie Pike* in 1956; the jungle adventures of *Ann of the Jungle* in 1959; and the early American tales of *Fort Wheeling* in 1962.

Pratt eventually returned to Europe in the mid-60s and settled back in Italy. In 1967, for a magazine featuring and entitled *Sgt. Kirk*, he created the first *Corto Maltese* story, a beautiful graphic novel entitled *The Ballad of the Salty Sea*. The demise of *Sgt. Kirk* in 1970 forced Pratt to find new outlets for *Corto Maltese*. He found them in France in the weekly magazine *Pif*, for which he created new *Corto Maltese* short stories, and the weekly magazine *Tintin*, for which he created another war



CORTO MALTESE.

saga, entitled *The Scorpions of the Desert*.

Corto Maltese's growing popularity quickly caused his stories to be first collected in albums by Publicness, then Dargaud,

ENTER MALTESE—In this panel from *Ballad of the Salty Sea*, Corto Maltese makes his first appearance, discovered at sea by the evil Rasputin.





In France, and Mondadori in Italy. Thereafter the French publisher Casterman started to serialize new *Corto Maltese* stories in their own monthly magazine (*A Sulfre*), and brought out a complete reprinted set of *Corto Maltese* adventures (with black-and-white and color versions of some of the books!).

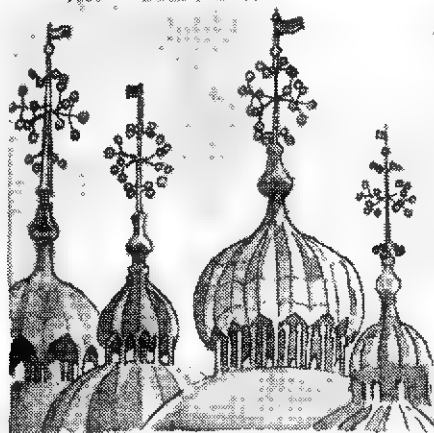
In Italy, meanwhile, *Corto Maltese* appeared in the magazine *Linus*, and now stars in his own magazine, *Corto Maltese*, published by Milano Libri. In it, Pratt carries on the exploration of the Corto Maltese legend, creating new tales to the great delight of his readers.

For the uninitiated reader, Corto Maltese is a somewhat like a combination of The Spirit and Indiana Jones. Sailor, adventurer, treasure-hunter, he travels the world. His documented adventures thus far take place between 1911 and the 1920s. Although he pretends to be cynical and profit-motivated, he is at heart an idealist and a revolutionary. He has accumulated much occult lore in his journeys, and his adventures often dabble in the supernatural. Corto meets many people who actually lived, and he has become involved in historical events. Sometimes he is less of a protagonist than simply an observer of the events occurring around him.

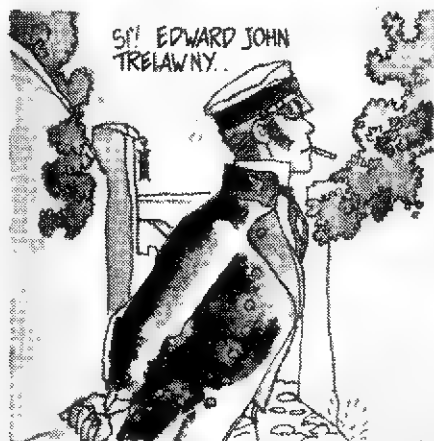
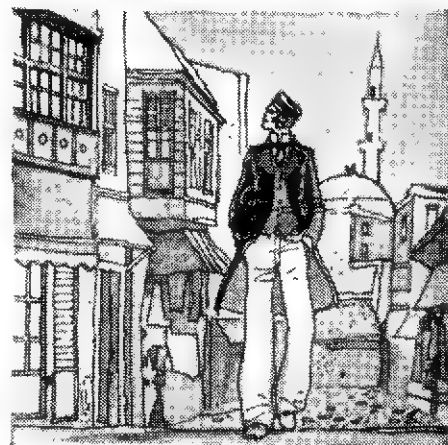
What do we know today about the life of that most charming of all adventurers, Corto Maltese? Of his early days, very little is known. His biographer, Pratt, has revealed tantalizing bits of information throughout the years, all remarkably consistent. In a few short pictorial features, Corto himself has shown us pictures of his youth.

Corto Maltese was born on July 10 (or so he says), probably in or around 1880. His father was a British Royal Navy sailor from Cornwall—the land of Tintagel, Merlin and the little people, who recognize in Corto one of their own. Corto's mother was a beautiful gypsy woman, well versed in the occult, from Andalusia in Spain. Nicknamed the "Nina of Gibraltar," she was also once a model for the famous painter Ingres. There is, in fact, a painting of a mysterious, unnamed gypsy lady by Ingres in the Museum of Rouen, who could very well be her.

Corto's parents met in Gibraltar. Corto himself was born in La Valette, on the Island of Malta (hence his name). Corto remembers Gibraltar and his family's spacious Spanish house.



... VOGLIO DIRE
QUI A
RODI !



SIR EDWARD JOHN
TRELAWNY...



L'AMICO DI LORD BYRON
AVREBBE NASCOSTO LE
"MEMORIE" GRECHE DEL POETA
QUI A RODI NELLA MOSCHEA
KAWAKLY...



... OPPURE NELLA LOGGIA
DELLA LINGUA DI
FRANCIA NELLA
STRADA DEI
CAVALIERI DI SAN
GIOVANNI...



As a child, Corto was taught by Rabbi Ezra Toledano, who had a lasting influence on his philosophy, and gave him an interest in all matters occult. He also learned much from his mother and her friends. One day, a gypsy friend of his mother, reading the palm of his hand, told him he was born without a line of fortune. Because of this, Corto opened himself one with his father's razor...

One day, Corto decided to become a sailor and see the world. He was approximately 15 when he embarked on the ship "Vanita Dorata." His next few years are still shrouded in mystery, but we know that he travelled to the Far East. He was in China in 1904 at the time of the Boxer Rebellion, and participated in the 1905 Russo-Japanese War, where he met the American writer Jack London and Corto's future nemesis, the Russian adventurer nicknamed Rasputin, whom he helps escape the Japanese. (Pratt has told this story in a tale entitled *Corto Maltese—His Youth (1904-1905)*.)

After this adventure, Corto leaves for Africa. Perhaps it is then that he meets Ann of the Jungle, Dann and O'Hara, and the other characters of Pratt's *Ann of the Jungle*, for he later refers to them as friends. We know that Corto eventually decides to become a full-time adventurer when he jumps ship in San Salvador de Bahia in Brazil in 1911. Of the next few years little is known; Corto said he visited Brazil, The Antilles, New Orleans (where he met a master of voodoo), India, etc. He acquires an Antiguan passport, and becomes officially a resident of Saint-Kitts.

Corto is reported to have been back in China in 1913, but his activities there also remain mysterious. By then, he is relatively wealthy. It is probably at that time that he acquires a beautiful house in Hong Kong, with a vast library, a Steinway piano and a Gauguin painting that Rasputin will steal seven years later. During that period of his life, Corto seems to have developed a network of contacts with Chinese secret societies and occult-related characters around the world.

We catch up with Corto in 1915 in the South Pacific near New Guinea. (This is the tale told by Pratt in *The Ballad of the Salty Sea*.) Corto has teamed up with Rasputin and works for the mysterious "Monk," master of the hidden island of Escondida. The Monk is helping the Germans' war effort in the Pacific. Corto becomes involved rescuing the young Cain and Pandora Groosvenore from the Monk, and eventually leads the British troops to occupy Escondida.

During the years 1915 to 1917, Corto has a series of 11 adventures in South America. The saga starts with the quest for young Tristan Bantam's inheritance, which leads Corto and his friend Prof. Steiner from Dutch Guyana to Brazil, where Corto meets "Golden Mouth," a quasi-immortal, beautiful mistress of Brazilian sorcery who knew his mother. Corto then becomes a free agent for "Golden Mouth," and eventually meets Rasputin again, when both men are after the same treasure. In the course of his South American adventures, Corto, always looking for mythical treasures, learns that the map of the kingdom of El Dorado is tattooed on a human skin that is being kept in a convent in Venice. He goes there in 1917, while World War I rages in Europe. After his stay in Venice, Corto has five more war adventures. In one of them, he meets Ernest Hemingway, then an ambulance driver. In another, he helps the Irish Sinn Féin against the British. Corto is then "drafted" by Oberon, Morgaine and Merlin to foil a German invasion of England. Later, he meets his old friend Cain Groosvenore, whom he saves in another adventure, and is present towards the end of the War when the Red Baron falls.

In 1918, Corto travels through Yemen, Ethiopia and then Eastern Africa in a series of four adventures. He meets Cush, the brave Yemenite warrior (whom Pratt will later bring back in another series), and the mysterious Shamael, one of the original Fallen Angels, a being who casts no shadow and knows all about Corto's enigmatic destiny. In Africa, Corto encounters the Leopard men, an ancient cult which acts as an African police force, and which makes him one of their number.

The following year Corto is back in China, where he and Rasputin become involved in a novel-length adventure (entitled *Corto Maltese in Siberia*), wherein White Russians, Bolsheviks, and Chinese secret societies all lust after 60 tons of gold carried in a train. As usual, Corto meets many historical characters, including the colorful Baron von Ungern-Sternberg, a mad nobleman who became a Mongol prince. Soon afterwards, Corto is back in Venice, looking for Solomon's Clavicle, a legendary emerald. This shorter adventure is entitled *Sirat al Bunduquyyat*, which means *Fable of Venice*. It is followed by another novel-length saga, *The Golden House of Samarkand*, which



HUGO PRATT, during his Buenos Aires period.

starts on the Island of Rhodes in 1923, and sees Corto follow the legendary "Silk Road" through the Middle East. In it, Corto again meets Rasputin, as well as another avatar of Shamael.

Of Corto's ultimate fate, we know nothing—yet. By the time of *The Scorpions of the Desert* in World War II, Pratt reveals that Corto himself has become a legend, which is ironic, considering the fact that Corto spent most of his own life chasing legends!

THE CORTO MALTESE SAGA

Story titles are classified according to Casterman editions and listed in internal chronological order (dates of Corto's career provided after each title).

Corto Maltese—His Youth (1904-1905)

The Ballad of the Salty Sea (ca. 1915)

Under the Sign of Capricorn (ca. 1916)

- The Secret of Tristan Bantam
- Rendezvous in Bahia
- Samba with Tir Fixe
- ... And We Will Talk Again About Gentlemen of Fortune
- Because of a Seagull

Corto Always a Little Further (ca. 1916)

- Mushroom Heads
- The Conga of the Bananas
- Voodoo for Mister President
- The Lagoon of Beautiful Dreams
- Fables and Grandfathers

The Celts (1917-ca. 1918)

- The Angel at the Window of the Orient
- Under the Flag of Silver
- Concerto in O Minor for Harp and Nitroglycerin
- A Midwinter Morning's Dream
- Burlesque Between Zuydcote and Bray-Dunes
- Cotes-de-Nuit and Picardy Roses

The Ethiopics (ca. 1918)

- In the Name of Allah the Merciful
- Coup de Grace
- Other Romeos and Other Juliets
- The Leopard Men of Rufiji

Corto Maltese in Siberia (1919-1920)

Fable of Venice (ca. 1921-1922)

The Golden House of Samarkand (1923)

Bruno Brazil

From James Bond to the A-Team and Back Again

It all started with James Bond—specifically, with the mass popularity of the Sean Connery movies in the 1960s. Very soon there were secret agents throughout the movies, TV, and comic books. The *Bruno Brazil* series, which ran in the Belgian weekly magazine *Tintin* between 1967 and 1976, was one of the best. The adventures ran through a rapid evolution, from suave and stylish detective dramas to a gritty and demoralizing commando-team action. By the end of the series, it was implied that Bruno Brazil had become worn out, ready for retirement. But at its beginning, *Bruno Brazil* was in a class with the best novels and movies in this genre.

Bruno Brazil was created for *Tintin* by William Vance and Louis Albert. Vance, despite his Anglophonic name, was a Belgian cartoonist born in 1935. He studied for four years at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels, then went through a brief career in commercial advertising art. By the time he came to the comic-book field, his art was almost too good for it; his style is of the sort one expects to see in idealized sketches of major real-estate developments, or magazine advertisements for the most expensive liquors or mens' wear. Vance's first two series for *Tintin* were historical adventures: *Howard Flynn*, early 18th-century naval action in the *Horatio Hornblower* style, and a Western, *Ray Ringo*. Both were well-drawn, but too slick and modernistic in technique to be convincing. Vance needed a more contemporary subject, so *Tintin* gave him one.

"Louis Albert" was a pseudonym used for the *Bruno Brazil* series by *Tintin*'s editor, Michel Greg. (This is itself a pseudonym; Greg's real name is Michel Regnier. Louis and Albert are Greg's two middle names.)

Greg was born in Belgium in 1931. He began to write and draw humorous comic art in the 1950s, and became prominent in the Franco-Belgian comic-art industry in the 1960s. In January 1966 Greg became the new editor of *Tintin* magazine. He immediately gave it a dynamic new look. He created many new adventure series, each drawn by a different artist. Greg recognized that Vance's sophisticated art style would be perfect for stories about a super-cool, jet-setting secret agent.

Bruno Brazil began as a try-out series of short stories scattered throughout *Tintin*'s 1967 issues. The first was the five-page *Une Fleur pour Cible* (A Flower for the Target). In the January 17, 1967 issue. A foreign agent enters a rich nightclub, and is about to pass a microfilm to his contacts when the police close in on him. He barely has time to slip the film into a flower on the tray of a cigarette girl. After the police leave with the spy, his contacts try to get the flower; but it is bought first by a tipsy guest in a tuxedo to put in his buttonhole. The contacts try to trick the guest into giving up the flower, but it quickly turns out that the guest is not drunk and is aware of what the flower contains. The guest is Brazil, who stayed behind after the spy's arrest to trick the contacts into revealing themselves. The final dialogue establishes that the police take orders from Brazil, but he is not a policeman himself. The story is just right for the short format. There is little action; the incident is brought off through witty repartee. Vance's depiction of the ultra-modernistic nightclub setting is excellent.

There were four more short stories, of seven pages each. *Plège sous Globe* (*Tintin*-assigned English title: *The Snowing Death*) has Brazil investigating the case of scientists killed by mysterious explosions in their homes. This story established that Brazil was a top operative in a high-level anti-espionage agency. It introduced a slightly naive co-agent, Barney Hawks, who served principally as a Robin to Brazil's Batman—i.e., as a reader-surrogate for Brazil to explain matters to. In *Réseau Diamant* (*The Diamond Network*), Brazil has to ferret out an enemy double-agent working within his own agency. Brazil's superior, the inevitable elderly "Colonel," first appears here. (In a delightful aside which didn't quite mention *Get Smart* by name, Greg established that the Colonel has a fondness for overlyelaborate trick entrances to the agency's headquarters, which the operatives themselves consider ridiculous.) In *Le bouclier de Verre* (*Tintin*-assigned English title: *The Case of the Sugar Shield*), Brazil must convince an ex-Mafia boss to become



BRUNO BRAZIL, conceived by Mike Greg, suavely realized by William Vance.

a government witness by proving to him that his "invulnerability" is actually easy for a hired killer to penetrate. *Les Poupées ont la Vie Dure* (*Dolls Have a Tough Life*), which appeared in the October 17, 1967 *Tintin*, has Brazil drafted by the Colonel for a private assignment when the Colonel's home is ransacked by a thief who didn't steal anything. Brazil must find out both the "who" and the "why" of the mysterious burglary. The Colonel and Barney Hawks are re-introduced, to begin building a supporting cast.

These five short stories fixed the character of Bruno Brazil as a nattily-dressed, smooth-talking secret agent. In a sense they were not true secret-agent stories; they were too short to allow the scope of action associated with that genre. They are actually police-procedural puzzlers. They could easily be re-cast with Ellery Queen for Bruno Brazil, and Inspector Queen for the Colonel. But this a quibble: they were snappily written and flashily drawn, and they were popular.

Reader reaction showed that *Bruno Brazil* was a hit. The March 12, 1968 *Tintin* began serialization of the first 44-page novel, *Le Requin qui Mourut Deux Fois* (*The Shark Who Died Twice*). An elderly man, injured in a traffic accident, is discovered to be a believed-dead Nazi war criminal. He reveals that he escaped to South America in a U-boat stuffed with 15 billion dollars' worth of war loot, but that the submarine accidentally sank off the coast of a major city before the loot was unloaded. Brazil and Hawks are sent to Caraguay to locate the sub. The two soon learn that practically every country that has secret agents is sending a team to beat the others to the loot. Worse, a deadly organization in Caraguay has already broken the cover identities of them all, and is murdering the agents as soon as they arrive. *The Shark Who Died Twice*, the first of the *Bruno Brazil* hardcover albums, is long enough to allow all the super-weapons, lone commando raids, deadly car chases, and other paraphernalia that the public expects in the best secret-agent adventures. The story also sparkles with Greg's clever dialogue and Vance's travel-brochure portrait of a modern, tourist-resort South American metropolis. Readers learned a bit more about Brazil's agency, as the Colonel appeared with a full name: "Colonel Lazarus D. Walsh, the brain of the 'Services,' the most secret organization of international defense."

The second novel, *Commando Calman* (*The Calman Commandos*), started serialization in the February 18, 1969 *Tintin*. This sent the series into a dramatically new direction. Bruno Brazil was transformed from a suave, debonair agent operating in high-society settings, into the leader of a tough commando team. A mad billionaire industrialist, Madison Ottoman, is trying to control the world by beaming subliminal advertising into satellite-transmitted TV broadcasting. He is operating from a base deep in the Amazon jungle, protected by an army of mer-

cenaries. Ottoman's trademark is a picture of a calman, so Colonel L appoints Brazil to be a "Calman hunter" to wipe out this base. The group that Brazil assembles for this mission is a 1969 version of The A Team. It includes "Big Boy" Lafayette, a disgraced racehorse jockey; Felipe "Gaúcho" Morales, a happy-go-lucky imprisoned criminal; "Whip" Rafale, a (woman) circus bullwhip artist; "Texas Bronco," a rodeo star (real name: David Thomas Jefferson); and Billy Brazil, Bruno's younger brother. Brazil molds these individualists into a smoothly-working team, and they parachute into the jungle to destroy Ottoman's private kingdom and his super-TV transmitter. The only escapee is Ottoman's beautiful but deadly girl friend, Rebel. *The Calman Commandos* is good hard-boiled commando-team action with lots of hairbreadth escapes and spectacular explosions. This album established Brazil's regular teammates for the rest of the series. It also added to the picture of Brazil's "Secret Service": definitely an American organization, and it had the authority to send "official government telegrams" to such places as state prisons, ordering them to release convicts (such as Gaúcho Morales), apparently with no questions asked.

The third through seventh novels pay lip-service to the Calman Commandos being members of a government organization, but it shows them having the initiative to pick their own missions without any need to report to higher authority. The villainess, Rebel, returns in *Les Yeux sans Visage* (*The Eyes Without a Face*) and *La Cité Pétrifiée* (*The Petrified City*). In *The Eyes Without a Face*, Rebel teams up with a mad scientist who has invented a super-brainwashing machine; they intend to use it for criminal purposes, but first she is determined to kidnap the Calman Commandos in revenge, and turn them into crazy killers who will be shot or imprisoned by the police. She does capture Texas and Whip before Brazil learns what is going on. The rest of the Calmans rally to rescue their teammates and smash Rebel's operation. In *The Petrified City*, Rebel and her new gang have an ultrasonic cannon that can paralyze an entire major city. She uses it successfully. Brazil and the Commandos must infiltrate the unconscious city and knock out Rebel and her army of gangsters before they finish looting the Federal Reserve Bank.

By this time the Calman Commandos might have been expected to have developed some personalities. However, there were only two real individuals: Bruno Brazil and Gaúcho Morales. Brazil was no longer the high-society dandy of the early stories. He had developed a wind-blown, outdoors-sportsman look. His dialogue was still intelligent, but it had become brisk and blunt instead of flowing with flowery phrases. He was always businesslike, while Gaúcho had become the new dispenser of witty social conversation. If Bruno Brazil had originally been roughly modelled upon Sean Connery, Gaúcho Morales was from first to last a blatant imitation of Gilbert Roland: flamboyantly Hispanic, hot-tempered, with a contemptuous disregard for legal technicalities, but basically good-hearted and absolutely loyal to his friends. He was the oldest of the Calmans, and tended to show off to prove that he was not getting too old to stay on the team. The other Calmans were all coolly competent to an identical degree. One of them happened to be an attractive woman, but the others went out of their way to treat her as an equal, so no romance developed from this. If the Bruno Brazil series had any serious flaw, it was the lack of character development. Almost all of Greg's clever lines would be equally appropriate coming from any character's mouth, male or female. But fortunately, Bruno Brazil did not need to depend on depth of characterization. The secret-agent formula was skillfully used, and that was enough.

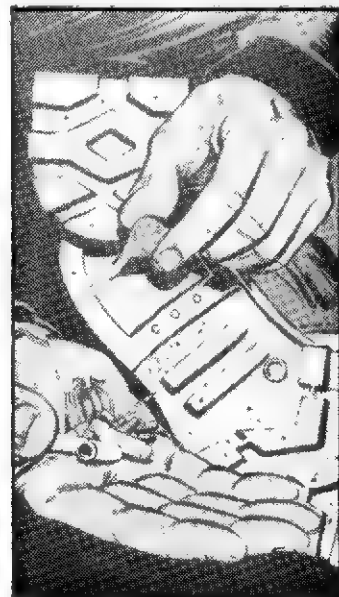
La Nuit des Chacals and *Sarabande à Sacramento* (*Night of the Jackals* and *Saraband in Sacramento*) form the only two-volume adventure. The Calmans are given a vacation, and Gaúcho Morales goes home to visit his parents after a long absence. He finds Sacramento under the control of the Mafia, whose junior thugs are shaking down the small businessmen, including Papa Morales. Gaúcho tries to take on the whole Mafia single-handedly, gets beaten to a bloody mess, and the rest of the Commandos come to his aid. *Night of the Jackals* closes with the cleaning-up of the small-time crooks. In *Saraband in Sacramento*, the Calmans rid the city of the rest of the Mafia by tricking the two godfathers into going to war with each other.

It is with these two albums that Bruno Brazil began to take a dark turn. The light humor of the early stories became increasingly bitter. Book-to-book continuity began to falter. Basic plot elements grew less believable. Sacramento, California is shown as a cross between Prohibition-era Chicago and the Hollywood stereotype of gangster-run Las Vegas. Brazil and the

Calmans take the attitude that, as government-approved secret agents, they can just enter town and start blowing up the casinos. They even appear on local television, where they are introduced as Mr. Bruno Brazil and his famous Calman Commandos, to declare war against the Mafia. When the talk-show host asks whether they aren't worried about casualties to innocent citizens, Brazil's answer is, "Sorry, no comment." The Sacramento Police Force issues a *pro-forma* warning against vigilante action which it makes no effort to enforce. Indeed, the police seem happy that someone who is not restricted by the legal formalities that hamper them has come along to do their job for them. The Calmans' justification for not bothering to inform Colonel L of their activities which include leaving whole blocks of Sacramento in smoking ruins—is that they're still on their vacation. Secret-agent melodramas often contain elements of fantasy, but at this point the Bruno Brazil series began stretching a reasonable suspension of disbelief.

If the seventh novel, *Des Calmans dans la Rizière* (*Calmans in the Rice Paddy*), hadn't been written in 1973, it would look like a clear rip-off of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. Bruno Brazil goes tramping around the Far East with a hero-worshipping young Oriental boy and a pretty but constantly-complaining woman: Gina Loudeac, a French tourist in Bangkok, and her 11-or 12-year-old guide Mat accidentally witness the murder of a spy. Mat had befriended Brazil on a previous occasion, and knows his American address. Brazil, coincidentally, is already en route to Bangkok to meet the agent who was just killed. The agent had found proof that a World War II Japanese secret weapon hidden in Thailand still exists, in the possession of a former Imperial officer turned crime warlord. Brazil calls the Calmans to help him locate the "Superkamikaze" rocket before "The Major" can sell it to an enemy power. Mat has to join the team to guide the Calmans through the Thai countryside, and Gina refuses to let the boy go on such a dangerous mission without her to protect him. The usual battle-action follows against the Major's private army, except that this time one of the Calmans is killed: Big Boy Lafayette. And it was all for nothing, because after so many years the Superkamikaze has decayed to worthlessness. The novel ends with a newspaper society-column note that the famous international polo player Bruno Brazil has married a French tourist in Thailand, and that the two have adopted a Thai orphan.

Calmans in the Rice Paddy contradicts *Saraband in Sacramento*. After appearing there on television as the "famous Calman Commando team," the Calmans have become genuine secret agents unknown to the public. Brazil apparently has a well-known cover identity as a jet-set polo champion. The commando-team action is still well developed, but the plot depends upon the reader believing (or accepting that the Calmans and other experienced agents would believe) that Japan could have built a single rocket of world-destroying strength during World War II, and that this rocket could remain on a hidden jungle launching pad for 30 years and still be ready to launch immediately. The cynical conclusion, plus Brazil's



surprising acquisition of an instant family, can make one wonder whether *Caimans in the Rice Paddy* was not originally intended to be the final novel in the series.

In the eighth and ninth novels the series again shifted dramatically. Colonel L and his organization, which had been off-stage since the Caimans were introduced, suddenly loomed over everything. Where the Caimans had scarcely bothered to pay attention to it before, they now needed its permission to do anything more than tie their own shoelaces. The organization now had a name, the World Security International Office (WSIO). However, despite this global title, it was clearly an exclusive operation of the U.S. government, not noticeably different from the CIA. Instead of being a totally unknown operation with disguised offices, it now had a headquarters which looked like a cross between the Pentagon and a high-class shopping mall. Finally it turned out that Colonel L was not the head of the WSIO, but only of a division within it.

These changes were introduced in an unflattering manner in *Orage aux Aleoutiennes* (*Storm Over the Aleutians*). Colonel L and a colleague, Colonel 4, are squabbling like children: "My secret agents are better than your secret agents!" Their superior, General Ryan, picks Colonel 4's team (led by "Congo Williams") for the toughest new job, and gives the Caimans an easy assignment because he feels that they're washed up. Colonel L, furious, orders Brazil to make sure that they transform this easy assignment into a "masterpiece." The assignment is to infiltrate a ring of U.S. Army deserters in the most desolate town in the Aleutian Islands, who are helping Asians to illegally immigrate into America. The Caimans also have to break in a new member imposed upon them by the WSIO: Tony Nomad, a flower-child, guitar playing hippie. Despite this gloomy beginning, things go well. Nomad turns out to be likeable and able to hold his own with the others, and is accepted by them as a worthy replacement for Big Boy. The Caimans discover that the smugglers are really up to a much more macabre racket; they kill several of the wetbacks on each trip, and use their bodies as containers to bring drugs into America. Brazil and his team handily annihilate the murderous drug-runners despite great odds, and are restored to favor within the WSIO.

Storm Over the Aleutians implied that the Caiman Commandos were back in business after a temporary unpleasantness. But the next novel, *Quitte ou Double pour Alak 6* (*Double or Nothing for Alak 6*), abruptly finished them off for good. Agents of a "foreign power" (obviously Soviet) murder the only Americans who know the plans for a new U.S. super-rocket, the Myxine. It turns out that the secret still exists in one last brain, that of Julius Saxon, a disgraced ex-agent who has become an alcoholic in the worst bars in Madagascar. The Caimans are sent in disguise as entertainers, the New Rhythm Angels, to find Saxon and bring him home. But the enemy is already watching Saxon. Their local team (Schlenko, Igor, and Sonia) kidnap Saxon and Texas Bronco, and expose the rest of the Caimans to the press to cause an international incident. The Caimans are humiliated, but they continue despite having their cover identities blown. The climactic battle is a hecatomb. All the foreign agents plus Saxon, Texas Bronco, and Billy Brazil are burnt alive; several innocent bystanders are blown up; Whip Rafale and Tony Nomad are critically wounded; and Bruno Brazil himself is mentally shattered. The final page of this last novel jumps four months and consists of a conversation between Gaucho Morales and Gina Brazil. The reader learns that Whip and Tony are recovering from their physical wounds (though they will be crippled for the rest of their lives); Bruno, however, is coming out of his trauma slower. They will just have to wait and let time, and Gina's and Mai's love, work their cure.

Fortunately, this was not quite the end. There was an unexpected epilogue, which was very nicely handled, even though it was obviously produced for purely commercial reasons. In 1977 a tenth album, *Dossier Bruno Brazil*, appeared. Gaucho Morales is called before Colonel L, who tells him that the WSIO is about to rebuild the Caimans. Bruno Brazil has still not recovered, in their opinion, so they expect to make Gaucho the new team leader. Gaucho protests that Brazil should be given



another chance. As the two discuss Brazil's past exploits, they go over his old files. This scenario is a setup to reprint the original five 1967 short stories, intercut with a page of new art in which Colonel L repeats skeptically, "Yeah, but how can we be sure he's still that good today?"

The change in William Vance's art over the decade does give the old stories a youthful, almost naive quality that makes the question seem natural. After the last of the old stories, Gaucho proposes that they set up a phony kidnapping of himself to see whether Bruno can rescue him with the old Brazil flair. Brazil does, of course, and wins Colonel L's confirmation that he will remain as the leader of the new Caimans. *Dossier Bruno Brazil* consists of 33 pages of reprints and 13 pages of new story. From the creators' viewpoint, it had the advantage of producing another full-sized album on which to cash in with only 13 pages' worth of new work. From the public's viewpoint, it had the advantages of making the original, long out-of-print short stories available once more, and of giving the Bruno Brazil series a more optimistic finale than in *Double or Nothing for Alak 6*.

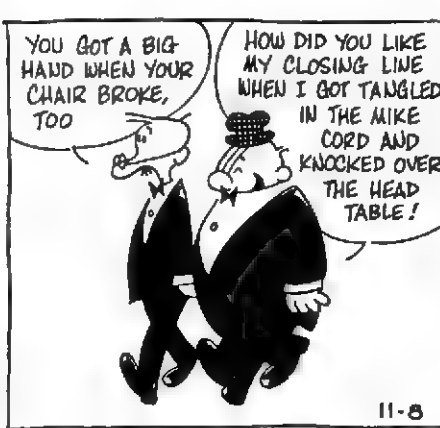
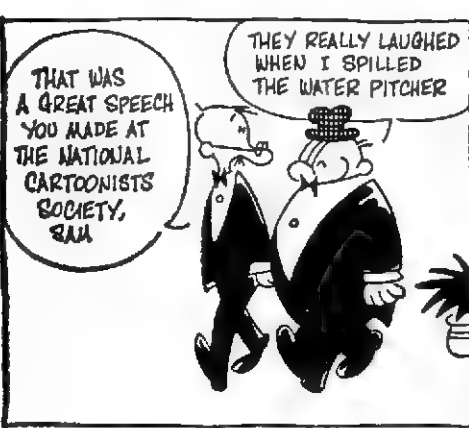
What happened to Bruno Brazil? It wasn't the character who got worn out, but, evidently, the author. Michel Oreg had been personally writing at least six major series for the weekly *Tintin* magazine since 1966, plus writing and drawing a major humor series, *Achille Talon*, for the weekly *Pilote* magazine, not to mention producing occasional lesser works. By 1976 he seemed just about burnt out, and to this writer showed a spreading gloom throughout all his strips, even the light fantasy ones—but especially in *Bruno Brazil*. Brazil and the Caimans were becoming too callous for readers to enjoy identifying with, or to remain plausible, so it was wise to end it as he did. The 10 Bruno Brazil albums remain in print; some of them may seem flawed, but every one is still good reading.

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1. *Le Requin qui Mourut Deux Fois* (The Shark Who Died Twice). 1969.
2. *Commando Caiman* (The Caiman commandos). 1970.
3. *Les Yeux sans Visage* (The Eyes Without a Face). 1971
4. *La Cité Pétrifiée* (The Petrified City). 1972.
5. *La Nuit des Chacals* (Night of the Jackals). 1973.
6. *Sarabande à Sacramento* (Saraband in Sacramento). 1974.
7. *Des Caimans dans la Rizière* (Caimans in the Rice Paddy). 1975.
8. *Orage aux Aleoutiennes* (Storm Over the Aleutians). 1976.
9. *Quitte ou Double pour 'Alak 6'* (Double or Nothing for 'Alak 6'). 1977.
10. *Dossier Bruno Brazil*. 1977.

SAM'S STRIP RETURNS!

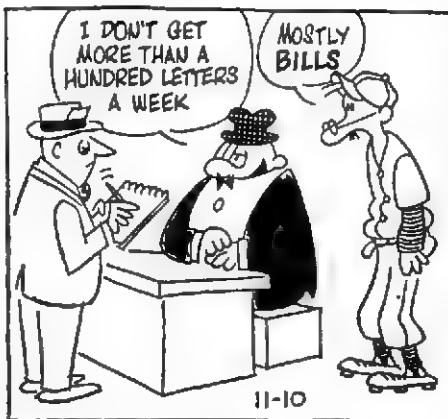
by Mort Walker and
Jerry Dumas



10-30 dumas

11-3 dumas

11-8 dumas



Hairbreadth Harry Returns to Earth



Cartoonist C.W. Kahles (1878-1931) drew the comic strip *Hairbreadth Harry* (1906-1940) that was notable in several ways. A long-running favorite, it was the first popular continuity strip and, for all of its tongue-in-cheek parody aspects, was the first major adventure strip. Harry may have endured silly adventures, but adventures they were nevertheless.

Begun as a satire on stage melodramas and then on early movie serials, *Hairbreadth Harry* soon became a comic strip with its own solid, independent credentials. Kahles achieved a remarkable synthesis of pictorial and narrative elements—the captions are technically superfluous but are hilarious—and routinely kidded the comic-strip conventions of sound effects, visual clichés, and cliffhanger devices.

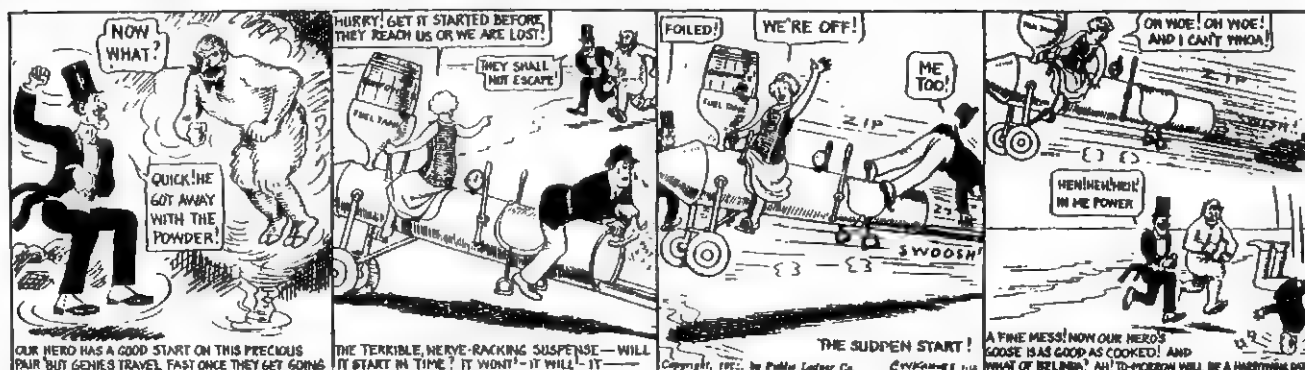
Mark Johnson has chosen a unique episode from the *Harry* saga: "Through Time and Space," a science-fiction story from 1924. It features the usual Harry/Belinda/Rudolph triangle replete with heroics, kidnappings, swoons, curses, and moustache-twirlings. But it also is an example of Kahles's inventiveness as he plays with speculations about the future and he parodies the inevitable monsters and gadgets of s-f fare.

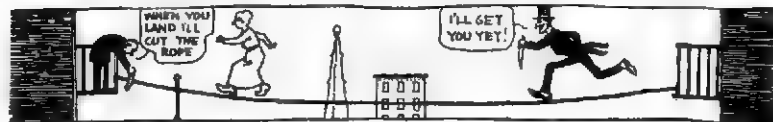
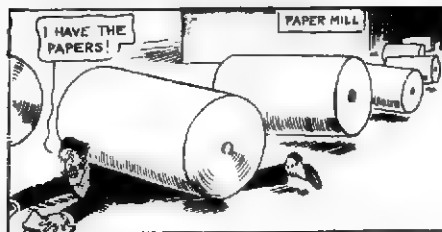
Synopsis: Harry and Belinda take a wrong turn during an aeroplane joyride and have wound up lost in space. After various scrapes they wind up on the planet Klukk, eventually falling in soft with King Cockadoodle. However, even through the expansive universe they are not safe from relentless Rudolph Rassendale, who proceeds to make their extra-terrestrial lives miserable by allying himself with the Klukk Klukk Klams, enemies of the King. So it's Harry and the boids against Rudolph and the assorted wolves, weasels, and moles.

Finally we escape with Harry, propelled back towards Earth. Stopping to re-fuel on the planet Venus, Harry realizes an orb populated by bathing beauties isn't so bad... but Belinda thinks it's the bunk. Even the jails are comfy and homey, but along comes Rudolph—having made a pact with the Bad Genies—to gum up the works once more. Read on.

N.B.: No spitting on the floor, and ladies will kindly remove their hats.

—Rick Marshall



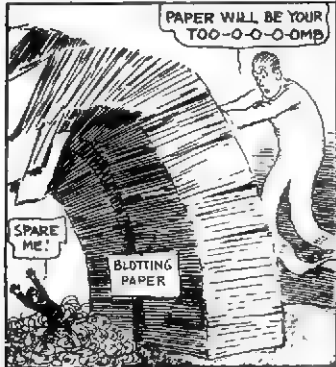
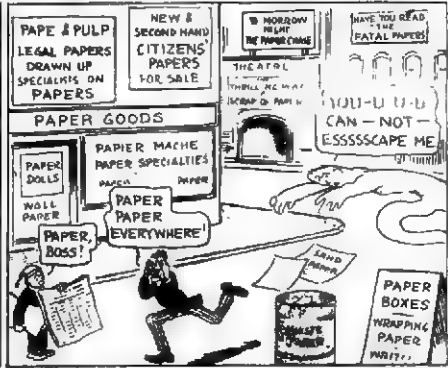
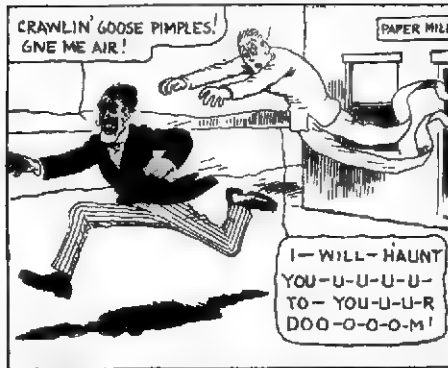
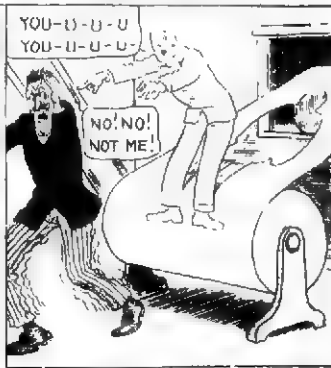
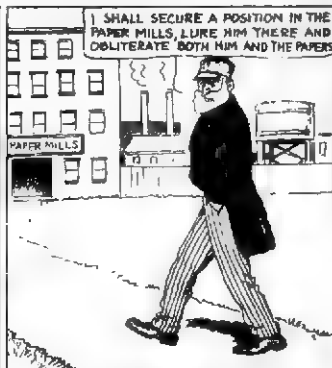


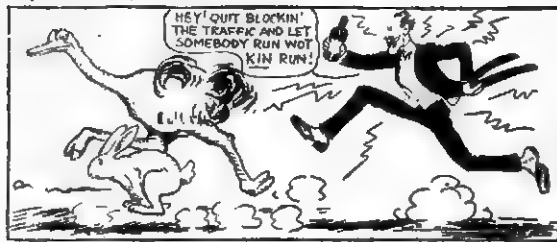
Hairbreadth Harry

Those Deadly Documents Have a Terrible Effect on Rudolph's Nerves!

By C. W. Kahles

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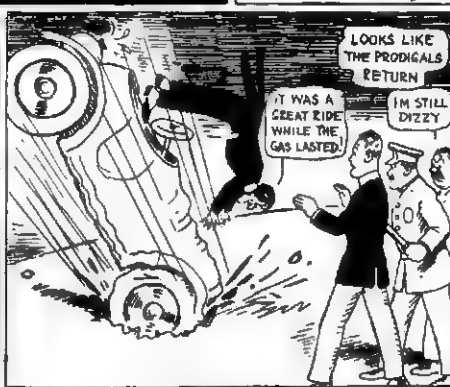
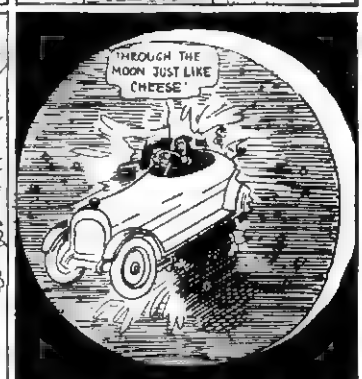
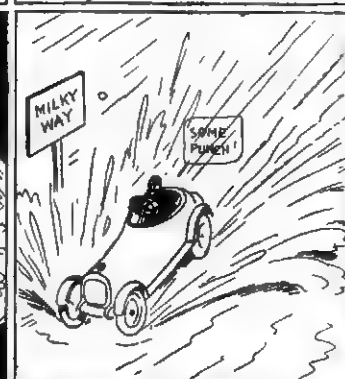
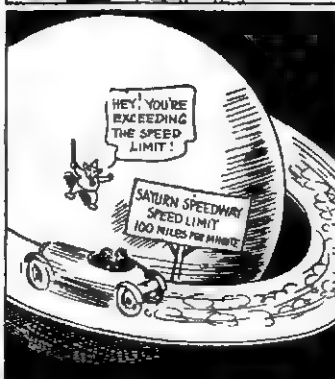
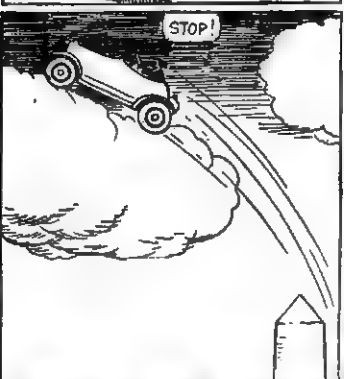
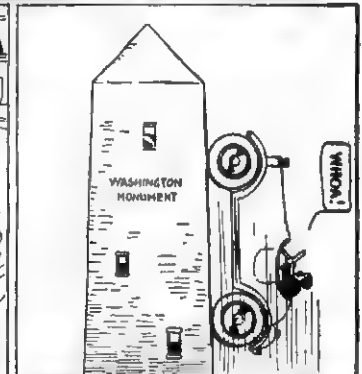
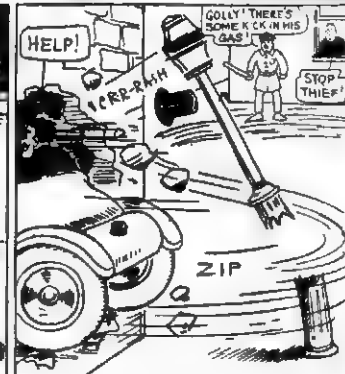
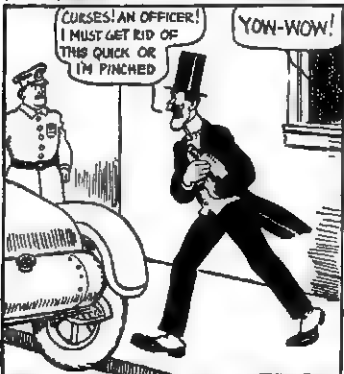
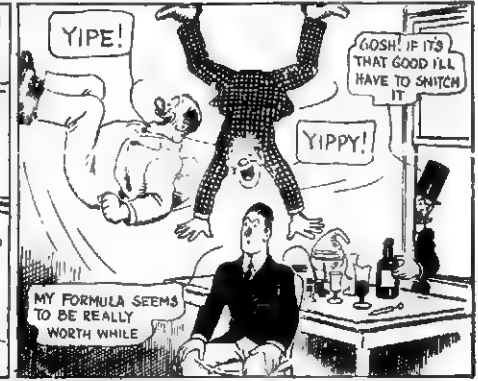
Sunday, September 12, 1920.

Hairbreadth Harry

Our Hero's Brew Is There With a Wollop.

By C. W. Kahles

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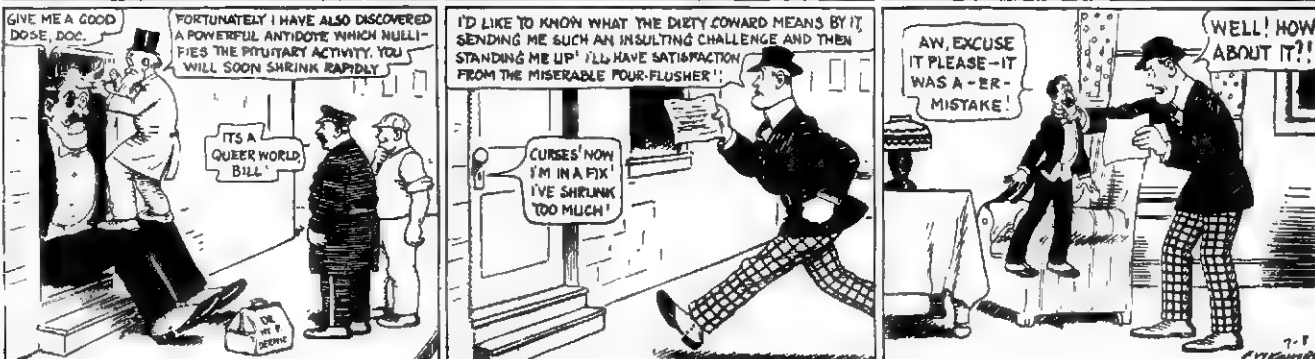
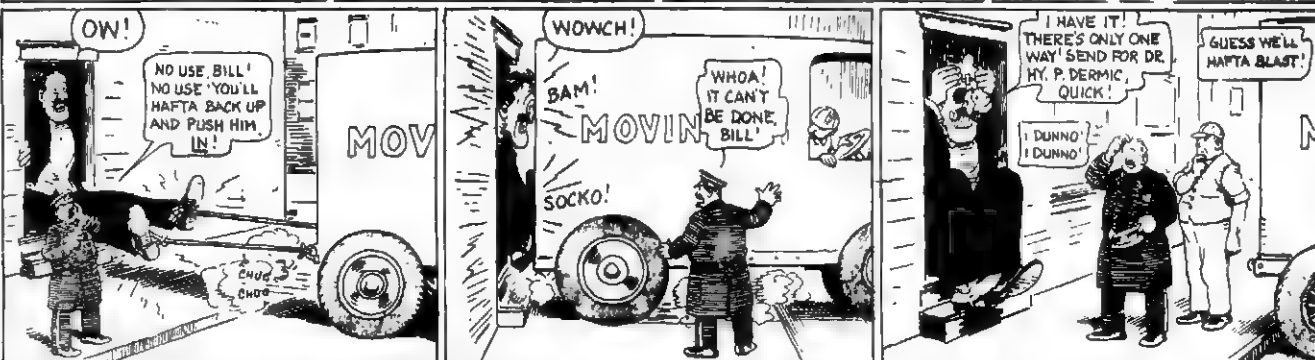




Hairbreadth Harry

It Was a Good Theory at That!

By C. W. Kahles

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"Through Space and Time" Part III — The Thrilling Conclusion



